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Settlers walk through a Hebron street yesterday, as talks on IDF redeployment in the city were said to be near completion. (AP)

PA: Deal includes final status schedule

Hebron pact to detail next stages

JON IMMANUEL

A PROTOCOL will be attached to the Hebron redeployment agreement giving precise dates for further redeployment and final settlement talks, senior Palestinian sources said yesterday.

The protocol issue was apparently not discussed in technical negotiations between the two sides, and agreement on it may have been reached in private discussions between Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat.

No dates have yet been finalized, but Arafat told Palestinian Authority legislators Thursday that he expects things to move quickly — about 45 days to the next redeployment of IDF troops and 60 days to commencement of final settlement talks. These talks are expected to take place in virtual secrecy, the Palestinian sources said.

Several other issues still remain to be finalized in the Hebron talks. Arafat wants an official



Palestinian presence at the Tomb of the Patriarchs and swift implementation of other delayed items such as further release of prisoners, especially women, opening of a safe passage between Gaza and the West Bank and the opening of Gaza's airport.

Justice Minister Feith Abu Medein said last week that Israel had agreed to release female prisoners immediately on signing the Hebron agreement, but this has not been verified by the Israeli side.

Mahmoud Abbas, Arafat's deputy, said in a meeting with Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Moussa in Cairo yesterday that Israel refuses to accept a

Palestinian demand for a joint patrol based at the Tomb of the Patriarchs. However, Erekat said on Thursday that this is not an issue in the technical negotiations as it is not called for in the original Hebron agreement. He understood that the matter is to be reviewed three months after implementation. Arafat told legislators in Ramallah Thursday that it was still his key demand. He became angry when Netanyahu rejected it in their meeting earlier last week. Without it, he told Netanyahu, "You can keep Hebron."

Netanyahu telephoned Arafat on Friday, at the Palestinians' initiative, Netanyahu's spokesman Shai Bazak said, but no details of the conversation were disclosed. Palestinian sources said Netanyahu tried to reassure Arafat concerning settlement expansion, which Arafat says threatens the whole peace process.

Arafat met last night in Nablus with the PA cabinet and members of the PLO Executive Committee (Continued on Page 2)

Gov't rips Histadrut, workers over strike

THE government blasted the Histadrut leadership and workers over the weekend for the strikes against the budget cuts and their violation of labor court restraining orders.

At Friday's cabinet meeting, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu condemned the wave of strikes declared by the Histadrut as a "political" action which has "no justification."

Ministers rebuffed the Histadrut's claim that the strike was planned to protest budget cuts, saying clauses in the 1997 budget that would have hurt the poor had been removed.

Finance Minister Dan Meridor condemned the Histadrut for ignoring labor court restraining orders against the strikes.

"It is inconceivable that workers

will violate the law and get backing for this from the Histadrut leadership," Meridor said, adding that the Histadrut's "delegitimization of the labor court is an attack on the essence of democracy."

The Tel Aviv Labor Court issued an arrest warrant for Histadrut trade union section head Shlomo Shani on Friday, after he did not appear in court for a hearing on his violation of restraining orders. The Ports and Railways Authority petitioned the court against Shani, who heads the Histadrut action committee.

Shani went underground over the weekend, and last night told Israel Radio he would appear before the court today after the demonstration outside Haifa Chemicals. (Story, Page 2)

Histadrut Chairman Amir Peretz

called on Meridor to enter into serious negotiations and not to engage in threats, which would "only bring about an escalation of the labor court is an attack on the economy."

Tomorrow, Tel Aviv Labor Court will hear a petition filed by Bezeq against the Histadrut and the workers for ignoring the court orders.

On Friday, workers staged a second day of striking to protest planned budget cuts. The strike closed Haifa, Ashdod and Eilat ports, and disrupted telephone services.

Leaders of the labor federation, who met last night to discuss their next moves, said strikes were planned in other sectors tomorrow, including government ministries, local authorities, the health sys-

tem, the airports and banks.

Last night, the ports renewed their strike which will continue today. The Electric Corporation and Mekorot will be operating on a Shabbat schedule today.

They have threatened to stage a general strike on Tuesday when the Knesset is due to vote on the 1997 budget.

The government's 1997 budget proposal includes NIS 7 billion in spending cuts and new taxes and other revenue measures that Netanyahu has said are necessary to rein in the deficit. Union leaders say the measures will erode workers' salaries. (Iim)

GSS advised PM to remove Hebron settlers

DAVID MAKOVSKY

WITHIN the last two months, General Security Service officials wrote a memo to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu recommending that after a Hebron pullback deal is reached, he consider removing the estimated 450-member Hebron Jewish community due to fears of settler provocations which could lead to bloodshed, The Jerusalem Post has learned.

GSS recommendations regarding Jews are customarily brought directly to the prime minister.

Some have interpreted the

memo to mean that the IDF needs to prepare at least a contingency plan to deal with such a possibility, assuming the premier refuses to take preventive action.

Netanyahu has made it repeatedly clear that he would not evacuate these settlers, instead viewing the Hebron deal expected to be signed this week as a way of ensuring their safety.

When asked for reaction last night, an official in the Prime Minister's Office said, "All

meetings between the prime minister and the head of the GSS are completely confidential, and its contents are not known."

Sources say in the aftermath of the 1994 Baruch Goldstein massacre in Hebron, the security establishment verbally concurred with a recommendation of then police minister Moshe Shabai and other Labor cabinet ministers calling for the evacuation of settlers from the Tel Rumeida section of Hebron. However, this idea was rejected by prime minister Yitzhak Rabin.

Shahak: War with Syria not imminent

CHIEF of General Staff Lt.-Gen. Amnon Lipkin-Shahak said on Friday that Israel and Syria were not on the verge of war.

Shahak spoke to reporters a day after Deputy Chief of Staff Maj.-Gen. Matan Vilna'i said the IDF was taking into account the possibility of having to fight Syria in the coming year and was planning its training schedule according to that assessment.

"In my opinion we are not close to a war with Syria. We said the assessment of the situation had changed, not that we are on the verge of war," Shahak said.

"There are changes in the area and we are aware of them. They don't point to an immediate danger of war. That's not the picture at this moment."

Vilna'i said on Thursday that Israel was taking into account the possibility of having to fight Syria in the coming year and was planning its training schedule according to that assessment.

Tensions with Syria soared in September when it moved thout-

News agencies

sands of its troops stationed in Lebanon to within striking range of IDF positions in the Golan Heights.

Damascus said the redeployment was defensive, but some Israeli officials saw it as a prelude to war.

Meanwhile, Syrian President Hafez Assad denied in an interview published yesterday that his country has renewed contacts with the Israeli government and said that Arabs are "more keen for peace than Israel."

In an interview with Egypt's *al-Ahram* newspaper, Assad also said that two former Israeli prime ministers — Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres — agreed to withdraw totally from the Golan Heights.

"The world should know that the Arabs are on the weaker side concerning weapons, [international] aid and their economies and they must be worried," Assad said in the interview. "Therefore, they are

more keen for peace than Israel." Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said in remarks published on Friday that he wants to substantially increase the defense budget.

"I believe that in the future, after we stabilize the economy and put it back on the right track, we'll be able to substantially increase the defense budget," *Yedioth Aharonot* quoted him as saying in an interview.

Rebels free more hostages in Peru

LIMA (AP) - Rebels released three hostages from the Japanese ambassador's residence yesterday following face-to-face talks between terrorists and a government negotiator.

In a communique read by freed hostage Arturo Pendavis, president of Peru's Exporters Association, the rebels said they would release 20 hostages later.

Earlier story, Page 3

End of the line for Cairo line

Jerusalem Post Staff and news agencies

EGGED'S regular bus service to Egypt ends today — after 15 years — due to a lack of passengers.

Egged was losing NIS 3,000 every time a bus made the 12-hour trip from Tel Aviv to Cairo with only about 10 riders, spokesman Ron Ratner said.

"The main factor is economic. In the last two years we've seen a steady decline in passengers on a line that's expensive to run. There is simply less interest today [among Israelis] in Egypt," he told Reuters.

The last bus to Cairo will leave Tel Aviv today and return tomorrow, Ratner said, leaving Israelis with the alternatives of flying or taking a chartered bus to Egypt.

However, Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai, who visited Egypt last week at the invitation of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, on Friday called on Transportation Minister Yitzhak

Levy to act to stop the cancellation of the bus line, No. 100.

Mordechai said the Tel Aviv-Cairo bus line is an expression of peace between the two countries and a sign of normalization. He said the peace with Egypt is strategic and each country must make efforts to preserve and nurture it.

"The operation of the Tel Aviv-Cairo line is important, even if the government will have to help Egged to maintain it due to the small number of passengers," Mordechai said in a statement.

Ratner said the government turned down Egged's request to subsidize the line, which was inaugurated in 1982, three years after Israel and Egypt signed a peace treaty.

Hundreds of Israelis traveled on the line every week during the 1980s, but Egged cut its service in recent years to just once a week due to the drop in demand.

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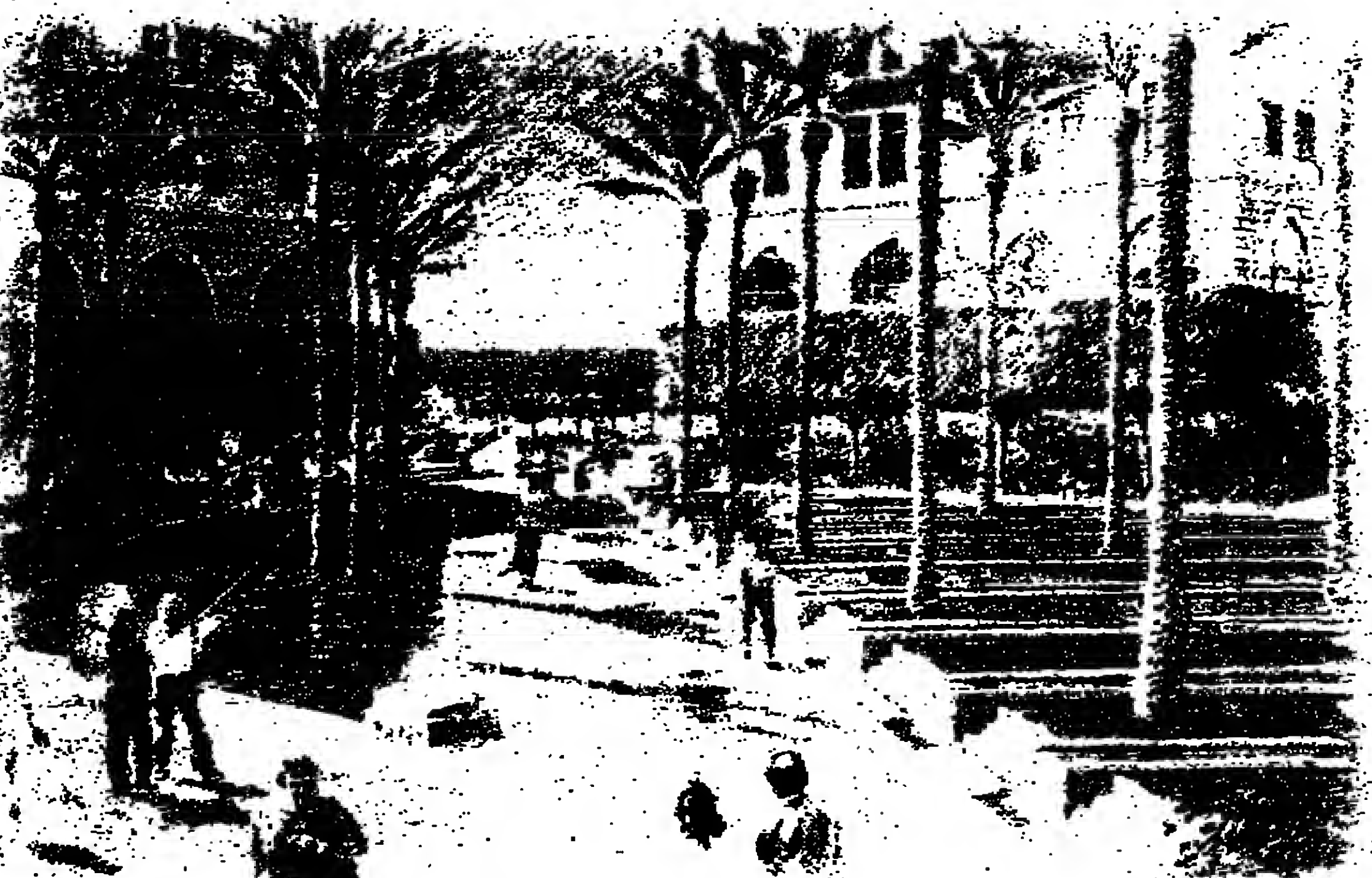
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Thousands of workers to protest at Haifa Chemicals

THOUSANDS of workers are expected to take part in a mass demonstration and rally at the crippled Haifa Chemicals factory in the bayside industrial zone this morning in solidarity with striking employees there.

"Hundreds of vehicles will converge on the factory bringing workers from all of the northern region to the demonstration, from Hadera to Kiryat Shmona, and this is likely to cause traffic tie-ups," said Histadrut spokesman Yossi Leibowitch.

It was reported that Histadrut Trades Union department head Shlomo Shani would attend the demonstration, despite the police search for him over the weekend in order to serve him with a warrant for alleged contempt of court.

The allegation relates to prolonged strikes, called by the Histadrut, on Thursday and Friday which caused widespread disruptions and delays at Ben-Gurion Airport and the Haifa and Ashdod Ports. The Tel Aviv Regional Labor Court had ruled that the

DAVID RUDGE

workers could only strike for three hours.

Histadrut Chairman MK Amir Peretz as well as several other MKs are also due to participate in the demonstration of solidarity with Haifa Chemicals workers, slated to be held in the factory yard.

"The Histadrut sees the struggle of the Haifa Chemical workers as a symbol, because this is a profitable factory but the company still wants to break the collective labor agreement," said Leibowitch.

"The company wants to bring in more personal contracts. If it happens at Haifa Chemicals it would open the gates to other employers to break collective agreements, dismiss workers and bring in people on personal contracts - something the workers and the Histadrut oppose totally," he said.

The Haifa Regional Labor Court is to rule tonight over a petition by the Histadrut for an injunction to prevent Haifa Chemicals manage-

ment from annulling the collective labor agreement at the factory. The agreement itself expires on Tuesday, after which the company would be able to renegotiate contracts with workers on an individual, rather than a collective basis.

Labor court judge Doron Maiblum heard the arguments of both sides on Thursday and said he would give his ruling on Sunday night. In the meantime, he instructed both sides to continue negotiations.

The Histadrut reported that some progress had been made in the talks, including an offer to cut the 500-strong work force by allowing 60 staff to take voluntary retirement, but two critical issues remained unresolved.

Management is pressing for the work force to be cut by a further 60 workers, in addition to those retiring early, and for those on personal contracts to compose a third of the remaining staff, instead of 11 percent at present. The Histadrut and the workers oppose both points.



Moslem students chat and stroll around the campus of Hebron University, which reopened yesterday. It was closed in the wake of last spring's suicide bombings. (Reuters)

Shahor submits his resignation

COORDINATOR of government activities in the territories Maj.-Gen. Oren Shahor submitted his resignation on Friday, nearly two months after being suspended for meeting with opposition leaders, Israel Radio reported.

The report said Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai accepted the resignation of Shahor, who has played a key role in the peace talks in recent years.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu suspended Shahor on November 1, after newspaper reports said Shahor had briefed opposition leader Shimon Peres on the peace talks without getting clearance from his superiors first.

Since his suspension, Shahor has not attended any negotiations

News agencies

on an IDF pullback in Hebron.

Under military regulations, IDF officials must receive permission from the defense minister to meet with politicians.

"I may have erred in not requesting formal approval for meeting with politicians," Shahor said Friday at a press conference at Mordechai's office. "I think ongoing and direct contacts with politicians from the entire political spectrum is a vital and fruitful network, and offers personal enrichment."

"It is important that we, the IDF generals in sensitive positions serving the nation, learn to gather information and widen our hori-

zons.

"We must be trusted and known who we can trust, so we know what to say and what not to say, whether we meet with Palestinian individuals, foreign statesmen and diplomats or Israeli politicians."

He said he did not want to link his resignation with his meetings with opposition politicians, and said the decision to resign was "my own personal decision."

Shahor wrote in a letter to Mordechai that it was hard for him to accept his suspension since he was certain he would have been given permission to meet with Peres had he requested it. Israel Radio said it was not clear when Shahor would leave the job.

Israel complains to Grapes of Wrath committee over Egoz ambush

DAVID RUDGE

THE Grapes of Wrath monitoring committee, because of the New Year holiday, is not slated to meet until January 6 to discuss Thursday's complaint by Israel about what it described as another breach of the understandings with Hizbullah - the roadside bomb attack in the security zone last Tuesday that killed two members of the elite Egoz unit and seriously wounded two others.

The attack occurred in Markabeh village in the zone's eastern sector and was filmed by a Hizbullah cameraman.

The two wounded soldiers are both in intensive care units at

Haifa's Rambam Hospital. Deputy director Dr. Zvi Ben-Isai said the condition of the wounded had improved slightly, although their understandings remained serious.

A clause in the understandings that ended the cross-border fighting during Operation Grapes of Wrath in April, bans firing or the launching of attacks from residential areas or near public facilities.

The five-nation committee established to supervise the understandings has several times called on both the IDF and Hizbullah to avoid fighting near

villages.

Military sources said last week that it was almost certain the bombers received help from local residents, who provided them and the cameraman with cover from which they could observe the movement of the IDF troops and detonate the device.

The IDF continued widespread searches in the Markabeh region on Thursday. The village and others nearby were placed under curfew and several local residents were reported to have been arrest-

ed as inquiries into the attack continued.

Meanwhile, more fighting was reported in the security zone on Friday with two separate mortar attacks on a South Lebanese Army post in the eastern sector. There were no casualties in either incident.

Apology

DUE to last week's airport strike, *American Outlook* is not available today. We apologize for the inconvenience.

Jordanian group vows to torpedo Israeli fair in Amman

AMMAN (AP) - A group opposed to normalized ties with Israel vowed yesterday to torpedo the first Israeli trade exhibition here, and threatened Jordanians who attend with blacklisting.

The three-day fair, set to open January 6, is sponsored by a private Jordanian firm as part of the trade cooperation with Israel outlined in the 1994 peace treaty between the two countries. More than 80 Israeli companies are to display high-tech products, garments, jewelry and furniture.

Ahmed Obeidat, the head of National Jordanian Committee for Canceling the Israeli Trade Fair, said his group includes parliament members, political par-

ties, trade unionists, women's groups and human rights organizations.

Obeidat, a former prime minister and one-time head of the feared General Intelligence Department, said his group will create a blacklist of participants, including reporters who cover the event.

"The blacklist will be accessible to all Arab organizations to boycott all those who seek to normalize relations with Israel," Obeidat said.

He also said his group will form a "human chain" outside the fair to prevent people from entering.

Obeidat called the event "a big threat to our economy."

PA

(Continued from Page 1)

in a session devoted to the settlement issue. He discussed ways to confront Israel on settlements and urged "political means and direct but peaceful confrontation."

He returned to Gaza last night by helicopter and is to fly to Cairo today for talks with President Mubarak. Arafat's request for flight clearance was accepted without any delays by Israeli authorities, in contrast to previous occasions when he flew between Palestinian towns. Arafat is scheduled to return from Cairo tonight to meet with Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai at Erez in an effort to sew up remaining security details.

At a meeting between Netanyahu and three senior Palestinian officials in Jerusalem on Friday, Netanyahu reportedly explained to preventive security chiefs Jibril Rajoub, Mahmoud Dahlan and Abdel Razak Yahya that he was motivated exclusively by security requirements. His decision to defer to Palestinian demands on a buffer zone was taken despite the advice of senior security officials. Palestinian sources said. He expected Palestinians to understand that he was working within the Oslo accords by taking steps to reassure settlers that they were not being abandoned.

On Thursday, Arafat told legislators that the previous government had assured him that Hebron redeployment would eventually lead to the removal of settlers from Hebron to Kiryat Arba.

Netanyahu says Oslo permits natural expansion of settlements, while Arafat maintains that neither party should take steps which prejudice final negotiations. Israel has promised to open Shuhadeh Street, which cuts through the Hebron Jewish quarter, in stages within four months of the redeployment agreement but reserves the right to decide exactly how it will go about easing Palestinian access to the street, based on security developments.

Hundreds of Jews went to Hebron yesterday for what may be its last weekend solely under IDF control. Hundreds went to

Report: Dead Sea Works planned to sell salt to Iraq in '95

THE Dead Sea Works planned to sell salt to Iraq in 1995 in violation of the UN trade embargo on Saddam Hussein's regime, *Ma'ariv* reported Friday.

The United Nations imposed trade sanctions on Iraq for its 1990 invasion of Kuwait. In the 1991 Gulf War, Saddam ordered 39 Scud missiles fired at Israel in hopes of drawing it into the fighting and breaking up the Arab alliance against him.

On Friday, *Ma'ariv* published a 1995 letter from the Dead Sea Works salt mining company to Mordechai Yona, a Tel Aviv contractor. In the letter, Israeli salt shipments to Iraq are discussed, *Ma'ariv* said.

"It seems to us that a salt shipment to Iraq should go through the Abdullah Bridge near Jericho," said the letter.

In a joint statement, Yona and the director of the Dead Sea

Works, Uri Ben-Nun, said, according to *Ma'ariv*: "There was an intent to sell salt to Iraq after receiving queries from an outside party who will remain nameless."

"We considered the offer but the Iraqis dropped the deal because they claimed the price of the salt was too high - the idea ultimately fell through and not one gram (ounce) of salt was sold to Iraq," said the statement.

Neither Ben-Nun nor Yona was available for comment Friday. However, the newspaper quoted an Israeli involved in the deal as saying that Israel did sell thousands of tons of salt to Iraq in 1995.

According to *Ma'ariv*, Jordanian and Palestinian business people initiated the deal and at least one former member of an elite Israeli commando unit was involved in sales of salt to Iraq. (AP)

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Three killed in weekend accidents
 Three people were killed and over 120 were injured in more than 70 traffic accidents over the weekend. Sa'id Tabur, 14, of Kafir-Reina near Nazareth, was killed on Friday when the car he was traveling in crashed into a truck head-on on the Nazareth bypass road. The car's driver was seriously injured.

In a similar accident, Tel Begin, 27, of Kibbutz Beit Zera, was killed when the car he was driving suddenly swerved into a truck, colliding with it head-on, near the entrance to Kibbutz Tel Katzir on Friday morning. A 25-year-old Ra'anana resident, who was five months pregnant, was fatally injured last night when a truck rolled into her. A 21-year-old Kiryat Gat resident was seriously injured yesterday afternoon when his motorcycle crashed into a parked tractor. A passenger on the motorcycle was slightly injured. *Itm*

Body washes ashore in Herzliya
 The body of a man about 40 years old washed ashore last night on the beach in Herzliya. No identification was found on him.

Nikolai Kulshankov, 37, and his son Oleg, 9, drowned off the Tel Aviv beach Wednesday night, and police are checking to see if the body of the man found in Herzliya is Nikolai's. *Itm*

Lod man wounded in clan battle
 A Lod man was moderately wounded by gunfire in Lod's Rakvet neighborhood on Friday during a clash between rival clan members. The wounded man was taken to Assaf Harofeh Hospital in Tzfat and will be investigated. *Itm*

LIBI
 The Fund for Strengthening Israel's Defence

LIBI's newsletter, "Libaton," is published twice a year - before Rosh Hashana and before Pessah - and includes up-to-date information about the activities and projects with which LIBI is engaged on behalf of the IDF.

This year "Libaton" was produced on a volunteer basis by Mr. Meir Slama, who plans to continue editing the LIBI newsletter for the forthcoming Pessah holiday as well.

At a ceremony held in the LIBI offices, a certificate of appreciation was awarded to Mr. Meir Slama and his wife Rita, who is active in the French-speaking circle of Friends of LIBI in Netanya.

NEOT HAKIKAR
 GEOGRAPHICAL TOURS

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Negotiator holds first face-to-face talks with Peruvian terrorists

LIMA, Peru (AP) - The government's negotiator in Peru's hostage crisis entered the Japanese ambassador's residence yesterday in what appeared to be the first face-to-face contact between the rebels and the government.

Education Minister Domingo Palermo went in accompanied by Michel Mimig, the head of the International Red Cross in Peru, and Bishop Juan Luis Cipriani.

Previous contacts between the two sides have been through the Red Cross.

There was no official word on the reason for the visit. The Red Cross said yesterday it has been

encouraging direct contact to replace its own role of neutral intermediary.

On Friday, police arrested three people suspected of having ties to hostage-taking terrorists, taking advantage of a presidential decree giving Peru's security forces broad search and arrest powers.

The arrests near the Japanese ambassador's home, where Tupac Amaru rebels are holding 103 VIP hostages, followed President Alberto Fujimori's decree of a 60-day state of emergency in Lima and the nearby port of Callao.

The measure authorizes police to stop and

TODD LEWAN
LIMA, PERU

search anyone on the streets or in their houses, and to arrest people without warrants. Constitutional guarantees have been periodically suspended in the capital since the 1980s to combat rebel insurgencies.

The state of emergency was Fujimori's latest bid to seize the initiative in an 11-day-old impasse with the 20 or so leftist terrorists who stormed the residence on December 17 and

took more than 500 hostages at a gala reception.

Their main demand is that Peru release their jailed comrades, who number about 300.

The hostage-taking brought worldwide recognition to an insurgent group many had dismissed as a spent force. It dealt a strong blow to Fujimori, who has staked much of his political fortune on pledges to stamp out terrorism.

The rebels have released most of the hostages, but 103 prisoners - including the ambassadors from Japan, Malaysia, Bolivia, Honduras and the

Dominican Republic - remain under the terrorists' control.

Early Friday, Peru's Congress voted to support Fujimori's measure and his policy of not negotiating with the rebels until they lay down their arms and release their captives.

Japan sent two military advisers and offered its support, along with the United States, for an international strategy to resolve the standoff.

But there were no hostage releases and little activity for most of the day outside the residence, which is surrounded by a three-meter concrete wall. (AP)

10,000 march after Serbian activist's funeral

DONALD FORBES
BELGRADE

TEN thousand Serbian opposition supporters, defying a police ban, marched in driving snow in Belgrade yesterday after the funeral of an activist who died in a Christmas eve riot.

Demonstrators chanted "Slobo murderer," spurred by a leader of the Zajedno (Together) opposition coalition who accused riot police loyal to President Slobodan Milosevic of causing the death of Predrag Starcevic.

Starcevic, the first fatality in almost six weeks of street protests against Socialist election fraud, was said to have been trampled to death by a crowd escaping a police charge.

No attempt was made to interfere with the march by police forces held in reserve, and the demonstrators dispersed without incident after reaching downtown.

Police banned marches after the rioting on December 24 when Zajedno fought battles with rival demonstrators organized by the Socialist party (SPS) and later clashed with security forces.

The unrest followed Milosevic's refusal to accept an SPS defeat by Zajedno in Belgrade and 14 of Serbia's biggest towns in municipal elections on November 17.

An OSCE mission to Belgrade led by former Spanish Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez urged Milosevic to recognize the election results on Friday, and its recommendation was published by *Politika*, the main socialist newspaper.

But there was no hint from the SPS that Milosevic, in the midst of a struggle for his own political survival, was ready to surrender.

The findings of the OSCE mission, announced on Friday, have

yet to be adopted by the body although most of its Western members, including the US, have led international condemnation of Milosevic's refusal to admit his election defeats.

They have also blamed him for the violence on December 24 when the SPS tried to stage a demonstration at the same time and place as Zajedno's daily protests, which previously were peaceful and good-humored.

Gonzalez's report, which was expected after mission members said they had found blatant examples of election rigging, gave Milosevic an exit route from the crisis.

One option trailed by diplomats was that he would turn over the disputed towns but quickly order fresh municipal elections to restore socialist rule, now facing its biggest threat in half a century of unbroken power.

There is no guarantee, however, that in Serbia's present mood the SPS could win fair elections in which Zajedno also had access to the state-dominated media.

Had Milosevic admitted defeat immediately after the elections, the Socialist government would have had plenty of opportunity to try and show opposition administration was inept.

Several weeks after the elections, the SPS now has less room for maneuver, with the West awake to the need to keep up the pressure on Milosevic for authentic democratic reforms.

Yugoslav Foreign Minister Milan Milutinovic said the OSCE report was "considered and balanced" without mentioning its recommendation that opposition victories should be restored. (Reuters)



The procession goes through the snow-covered Belgrade cemetery yesterday during the funeral of Predrag Starcevic, who died on Tuesday after being beaten by supporters of President Slobodan Milosevic. At least 10,000 joined the procession. (AP)

Police defuse bomb under Sinn Fein man's car

BELFAST (Reuters) - Sinn Fein, the political arm of the IRA, warned Irish nationalists yesterday that they should be on the alert against attack by pro-British Loyalists after police defused a bomb under a leading Republican's car.

Security forces in Northern Ireland meanwhile continued a clampdown in an Irish nationalist stronghold of Belfast after making overnight arrests.

A Sinn Fein spokesman in Londonderry, Northern Ireland's second city, said a "suspect device" had been found on the ground under the car of party official Liam Duffy at a Catholic housing estate in the largely Protestant Waterside area.

Police later confirmed it was a bomb. A spokesman said: "Army experts have defused a device found under a car."

Police declined to say who they suspected of planting the device. "It is a matter for investigation," one source said.

The incident comes a week after Loyalist guerrillas were blamed for a car bomb that wounded a leading republican, Eddie Copeland. Protestant leaders close to the pro-British extremists denied the attack signalled the end of their two-year-old truce.

Senior Sinn Fein official Martin McGuinness said pro-Irish Catholic nationalists and republicans should be "extremely vigilant" after yesterday's incident involving Duffy, the party's director of elections in Waterside.

The incident comes at a time of heightened tension after attacks by Irish Republican Army guerrillas opposed to British rule, and fears that a two-year-old cease-fire by pro-British Loyalist foes may be over.

The IRA resumed hostilities in a 27-year war on British rule last February after an 18-month truce.

Politicians across the sectarian divide say they believe Loyalist hard-liners carried out last Sunday's attack even though the Combined Loyalist Military Command has maintained silence and figures close to the guerrillas say the cease-fire is intact.

Security forces continued their clampdown yesterday afternoon in the White Rock area in the west of Belfast, where soldiers and police sealed off a house.

"A number of persons were taken into custody," a spokesman said, but declined to say if guerrilla weapons had been found. Residents said at least five people were arrested at the house.

Air raids hit Kabul as Taleban advance

QARABAGH, Afghanistan (Reuters) - Forces of the Purist Islamic Taleban have made a major advance north of Kabul, capturing the strategic villages of Qarabagh and Ishtif, some 40 kilometers north of the city.

In a fierce 24-hour battle that started Friday morning, Taleban fighters drove back opposition forces at least 10 km, the Taleban governor of Kabul, Mullah Kairullah Khaikhwah, said yesterday.

"Yesterday we launched an attack from Ishtif and Qalagan. We captured the village of Qarabagh and moved north. We have also captured the hills overlooking Bagran airbase (some 60 km north of Kabul). We have taken over 200 prisoners and there are many dead."

Kabul was hit by bombing raids four times yesterday - the first major air attacks on the capital in a month - and Taleban officials in Kabul said they believed the raids were in retaliation for opposition losses.

Although there were frequent air raids in the immediate aftermath of

the Taleban's capture of the city September 27, when it ousted the government of President Burhanuddin Rabbani, there had been no major raids in over a month.

When journalists drove to Qarabagh yesterday morning, there were dozens of bodies of opposition fighters lying by the road, many of them with bank notes or coins thrust into their mouths or hands - a symbol of the mercenary.

Mullah Khaikhwah said the Taleban were negotiating with the International Committee of the Red Cross to return the bodies to the opposition.

Maulawi Jalaluddin Haqqani, the Taleban front line commander, said that the fighting had stopped to allow refugees to flee the area.

"The fighting isn't finished, but we are letting the women and children escape the area. When they have gone, we will start fighting again," Haqqani said.

Taleban fighters had made makeshift examples of their trademark white flag by cutting short lengths of cloth from their turbans.

Tajik fighters release two Western captives

TASHKENT, Uzbekistan (Reuters) - A Briton and a South African captured by guerrillas in war-torn Tajikistan were freed yesterday, the head of their mining company said.

"They have been released. They are now in (the Tajik capital) Dushanbe and they are in good form," Robert Mendelsohn, head of London-based Gold and Mineral Excavation Ltd, told Reuters in the neighboring republic of Uzbekistan.

The Briton, Alex Lemon, and the South African, Barret Knotze, were held by Tajik Islamist fighters for nearly three weeks after the

mine where they were working, in Darvaz in the south of the former Soviet republic, came under their control.

Mendelsohn said the United Nations, the International Committee of the Red Cross and British diplomats were all involved in securing their release.

The company kept the story out of the public eye for fear of jeopardizing their employees' chances of release. Mendelsohn refrained from using the word "hostages" and said the two men were just "unexpected guests" of the Tajik rebels.

Two bombs wound 19 in Algiers

PARIS (Reuters) - Nineteen people were wounded when two bombs exploded in a cafe and a bakery in Algiers on Friday, Algerian newspapers said yesterday, blaming the latest in a string of attacks in the Algerian capital on Moslem rebels.

Two car bombs in Algiers earlier in the week were reported to have killed at least 18 people.

El Watan newspaper said a bomb hidden in a box exploded on Friday morning at a bakery in the Moslem fundamentalist stronghold of Eucaalyptus in southern Algiers, wounding seven people.

Twelve more people were wounded when a second bomb exploded in a cafe in the same area, said *Liberte* newspaper. The newspapers blamed Moslem guerrillas for the two bombings.

On Thursday a car bomb exploded near a paramilitary police station in Algiers, killing at least 10 people and wounding 68. Monday a car bomb ripped through the capital's commercial Larbi Ben Mehdi Street. The security services said it killed three people but local newspapers put the death toll at eight and said more than 70 were wounded.

Liberte said after Monday's attack that the rebels had made a mockery of government claims to have gained the upper hand in the war against the Islamic fundamentalists.

About 60,000 people have been killed in Algeria since early 1992 when the authorities cancelled a general election which radical Islamists were poised to win.

Yemenite soldiers killed in tourist hostage siege

SANAA (Reuters) - Yemenite tribesmen holding European tourists hostage fired rocket-propelled grenades at surrounding military forces, killing three soldiers and wounding five, witnesses said yesterday. In the second kidnapping involving European holidaymakers this month, members of the Al al-Masni tribe abducted five tourists this week in the Khawlan area, about 65 km east of the capital Sanaa.

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WORLD NEWS

Snow hits US Northwest, knocking out power

RORY MARSHALL
SEATTLE

A POWERFUL storm that dumped snow and freezing rain across the American Northwest left more than 300,000 homes and businesses without power in Washington and Oregon, stymied buses and planes and closed highway passes through the Cascade Range.

Downtown Seattle was a virtual ghost town on Friday, with almost no traffic and few people. The coffee houses managed to stay open, though.

"We are like the mailmen - we have to be," said Kirsta Catlin, manager trainee at a Starbucks coffee shop near downtown. "In fact, I think we have mailmen in here right now."

The storm sent ice-laden trees crashing down on homes, streets and power lines in Washington and Oregon, and more rain and snow were expected late yesterday.

"It looks like the same thing all over again," said National Weather Service meteorologist Bob Robinson. His forecast: "The same amount of precipitation - or higher."

At least three deaths were blamed on the storm. A Portland, Oregon man died of a heart attack while trimming broken tree limbs in his yard; a 62-year-old Washington state woman was killed in a collision Thursday with another car on a road covered with snow and ice; and a Washington state man was asphyxiated by fumes from a generator being operated in a closed area at his home.

Snowfall amounts in western Washington ranged from about half a foot (15 cm.) in downtown Seattle to 13 1/2 inches (34 cm.) in suburban Mountlake Terrace.

Scores of holiday travelers and skiers were stranded when at least 2 feet (0.6 meters) of snow closed the two major routes across the Cascade Range in Washington - Interstate 90 over Snoqualmie Pass and U.S. 2 over Stevens Pass. Stevens Pass reopened Friday afternoon to vehicles with chains. White Pass near Mount Rainier - was intermittently opened. Interstate



Heavy ice from Wednesday's storm still clings to lamps, signs, and sidewalks as Heidi and Jerry Eichenoph maneuver on slippery ground in Troutdale, Oregon, on Friday. (AP)

90 was expected to be closed until yesterday. The suspension-style Narrows Bridge, which crosses Puget Sound at Tacoma, was closed briefly Friday afternoon because of falling icicles. And Olympia police responded to so many accidents they ran out of road flares and had to borrow some from the

state. Puget Sound Power and Light Co., Western Washington's largest private utility, had 246,330 customers without service Friday afternoon - an increase from the morning as ice-coated wires and tree limbs continued to fall, utility spokeswoman Betty Werblum said.

Russia, China seek strategic partnership to counterbalance West

RUSSIA and China vowed yesterday to forge closer military and economic ties to counter the US's influence in the post-Cold War world.

In a joint communique at the end of Chinese Premier Li Peng's three-day visit to Moscow, the two Eurasian giants proclaimed a new era in their relations.

Russian newspapers hailed the new "strategic partnership" yesterday. The respected daily *Izvestia* called it "our reply to the United States" and *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* said "it will entail changes of a geopolitical nature."

"Moscow and Beijing form a multipolar world," proclaimed another major daily, *Segodnya*.

The Soviet collapse left the world with one superpower - the US - and Russia's post-Cold War foreign policy has been aimed at diluting American domination of world affairs.

Moscow is bitterly opposed to the eastward expansion of NATO, for example, and is cast-

CANDICE HUGHES
MOSCOW

ing about for counterweights to the American-dominated alliance.

The communique indicated it had found one in China, once Moscow's bitter rival in the socialist world.

Russia and China are determined to create an "equal partnership... aimed at strategic interaction in the 21st Century" and "building a multipolar world," it says.

Moscow is also seeking new customers for its arms and technical expertise, and China, with its booming economy and 4,300-kilometer border with Russia, is a logical market.

"Cooperation between Russia and China in different spheres has a vast potential" for boosting development in both countries, the communique says.

China is turning into a lucrative customer for Russia's aerospace and defense industries.

It has cosponsored training in Russia and has bought advanced Su-27 fighters planes along with the technology to make more. Russia officials hope to sell China destroyers, light armored vehicles and civilian aircraft as well.

Li met for nearly an hour on Friday with President Boris Yeltsin. He was the first foreign leader to visit the president since Yeltsin returned to work at the Kremlin last week after a months-long absence for heart surgery.

They agreed to a Russian-Chinese summit in April in Moscow at which agreements on reducing border troops and a number of agreements to build ambitious energy projects will be signed.

Trade was high on the agenda during Li's visit. Mutual trade is now at \$7 billion a year. Officials said the two sides set a target of \$60 billion next year and hope it will soon reach \$200 billion. (AP)

Ex-IRA bomber tells of plan to kill royal couple

NEW YORK (Reuters) - The Irish Republican Army (IRA) planned to kill Prince Charles and his new bride Princess Diana at a rock concert in 1983 but the plot failed when an informer betrayed the IRA. *The New York Times* reported on Friday.

Former IRA operative Sean O'Callaghan - who was also an informer for the Irish police special branch, and British intelligence - told the *Times* he was ordered to kill the royal couple at a London concert. O'Callaghan said after discovering the Prince and Princess of Wales would attend a Duran Duran concert on July 20, 1983, he was sent to London and given delayed timing detonators and 11 kg of a powerful mining explosive called Frangex gelignite.

He checked out the theater and found a spot in the wall of a bathroom near the royal box where the bomb would fit. He also learned the time when cleaning women opened the restroom, giving him the two hours he needed to plant the bomb.

"It would have worked, it had a high chance of success," O'Callaghan was quoted as telling the *Times* in an interview in London.

The assassination plan failed, among other reasons, when O'Callaghan betrayed the IRA.

Palace unamused by fake photo of Diana with a whip

LONDON (AP) - A faked advertising photograph of Princess Diana dressed in leather and carrying a whip has provoked the royal household into action against a magazine.

The composite photo, used in a December 17 newspaper advertisement for the satirical *Insider Magazine*, carried a message about "a spanking New Year."

Insider editor Tim Satchell said Friday he thought Diana looked stunning in the outfit and that she was "a beautiful, witty woman" who would appreciate a "beautiful, witty photograph."

But Buckingham Palace was not amused.

The Earl of Airli, who is Lord Chamberlain, or head of Queen Elizabeth II's household, has complained to the Advertising Standards Authority.

A palace spokesman said on Friday the fact that the princess was divorced from Prince Charles did not affect the decision.

"The Princess of Wales remains a member of the royal family, as the announcement of the divorce arrangements made clear," the spokesman said anonymously.

"It is against the Lord Chamberlain's rules and guidelines, which are applicable to all advertisers, to use images of the royal family without permission for commercial purposes," he said.

Satchell said "there was certainly no intention to mislead. The photograph is a collage, but amazingly lifelike and the princess looks quite stunning in the outfit."

"The ASA wanted to know whether we had permission to dress her in fetish wear. Through an administrative error we failed to ask for it," Satchell said. "We are now applying retrospectively."

"We are great admirers of the princess and already several dozen people have asked for reproductions of the cover. We are a magazine of wit and the princess is well known for her sense of humor, so I am sure we will sort this matter out."



The cover of the January issue of 'Insider Magazine' in Britain shows a faked advertising photograph of Princess Diana in leather gear and carrying a whip, which provoked a royal protest to the Advertising Standards Authority. (AP)

Victim No. 16 in Scottish food poisoning

AIRDRIE, Scotland (Reuters) - A 91-year-old woman died of food poisoning yesterday, bringing to 16 the number of lives claimed in Britain's worst outbreak of the condition.

"She had been admitted on November 28 and her condition had been giving cause for concern

for some time," a spokesman for the local health authority in Scotland said.

The woman had contracted the E coli bacteria from produce bought at the butchers suspected of triggering the outbreak.

All those who have died have been elderly. The last death

occurred on December 18. More than 300 people have reported symptoms of the poisoning in which can cause kidney failure in the vulnerable. The bacteria, which can be found in the guts of cattle, sheep and people, gets into food via improper slaughtering techniques or through manure used as a fertilizer.

Some see gambling saving NY's famous Borscht Belt

JON KALISH
KIAMESHA, New York

IN the not-too-distant future, the Catskill Mountains, long a home to Borscht Belt comedians, Orthodox Jews and meditation gurus, could become a refuge for high-stakes gamblers if an alliance of American Indians and businessmen has its way.

Actually there are two scenarios under which gambling could come to the region - an Indian-run casino on land ceded to a tribe for gaming or a statewide referendum that would permit casinos in the Catskills and three other areas in New York state.

Originally the Oneida Indians were considering a casino at the faltering Monticello Raceway, but the tribe has since held discussions with the Concord, a 1,200-room resort in the town of Kiamasha

that is said to be near bankruptcy. Walk down almost any main street in Sullivan County in the heart of the Borscht Belt and empty storefronts and idle men testify to a battered economy. The area has one of the highest unemployment rates in the state and many of the large hotels are on the ropes.

"There's only about eight weeks of real economy here a year," said Jim Carponeto, president of the Sullivan County Business Association, who believes a casino on the raceway across the street from his Italian restaurant would give the entire area an economic shot in the arm. "You're talking

some 3,000 jobs just at the casino and there would be another 11,000 spin-off jobs."

For years the Catskills have been a refuge for people from New York City. By car, it is just an hour-and-a-half from the city to the rolling green hills and streams of the Catskills. Even people who have never been there have heard of the legendary hotel dining rooms where the food keeps coming and the ballrooms where vaudeville stunts were served up by the likes of Milton Berle and George Burns.

There were once 300 hotels in the Catskills, but today only seven major resorts are left as the advent of cheap air travel and widespread air-conditioning in the city took their toll.

"I would say that there are certain hotels up here that will not survive if we don't get casinos, and there are several of us who will," said George Parker, one of the owners of the Concord, which is behind in both its property taxes and utility bills.

Lee Karr, a local builder who is chairman of the Coalition Against Casino Gambling, believes the era of the Borscht Belt resorts is over in any case. Karr is bitter about the owners' embrace of gambling, which he insists will leave a trail of victims in its wake.

"It steals from the poor and gives to the rich. It's the Robin Hood principle in reverse," he said. "The casinos will clean people out indiscriminately, meaning that they prey on people who are addicted and can't stop."

Many of the tens of thousands of Orthodox Jews who flock to the Catskills every summer from New

York are opposed to casinos. In Vacation Village, a community of 200 families, many of them "snowbirds" who migrate to Florida for the winter, there is support for the idea. "Taxes are constantly going up and nobody here who's a homeowner appreciates that," a retired civil servant from Brooklyn said.

"I've never from something that's going to provide jobs and increase the tax base," his wife, a retired teacher, added. "I'm not sure about gambling as the answer but let's try it... (it) can't hurt."

If an Indian-run casino is to come to the Catskills, it would have to be approved by Gov. George Pataki because it would not be on Indian land, where courts have held tribes are free to open casinos. The Pataki administration has reportedly raised the issue during land claim negotiations with the Oneida Indians.

If non-Indian casinos are ever to come to the Catskills, the legislature in Albany would have to approve and there would have to be a statewide referendum, followed by local referenda in the Catskills and three other regions in the state where gambling has been proposed. Both opponents and supporters of gambling in the Catskills agree Sullivan County voters would likely approve it.

"Most people think that the county would pass a local referendum, but it may not get to that point because there's a lot of disagreement about whether or not the statewide referendum will pass," said T.R. Pavis-Weil, a writer with the *Middletown Times Herald Record* who has been covering the issue of gambling.

The earliest such a statewide referendum could be held is

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BackWeb: A surfers' paradise

JUDY SIEGEL-ITZKOVICH

IMAGINE going to a major university library and having to search for books on a specific topic in a few minutes using an index listing every volume in which a certain word is found. You will be overwhelmed with information, and the chances of locating what interests you are those of finding a needle in a haystack.

That dilemma is increasingly posed by the Internet, which is rapidly becoming an electronic jungle populated by hundreds of thousands of Web sites and databases. "Data mining" — the finding of relevant and accurate information from electronic sources — is a new profession resulting from this cornucopia of material.

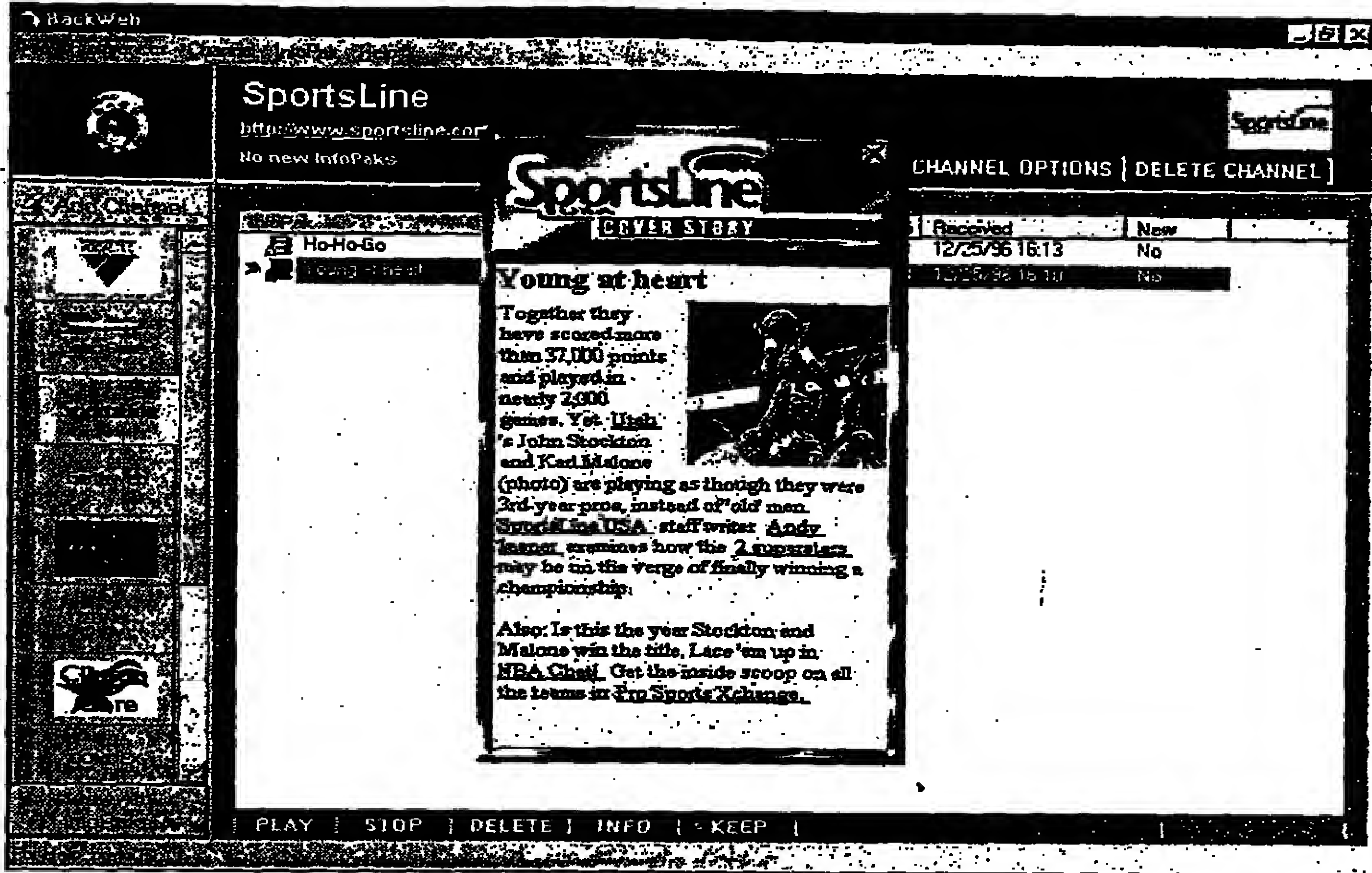
Now, a new Israeli-developed technology is helping to personalize the Internet, automatically but politely giving access to information that each user seeks instead of forcing him to search for it and wait until it slowly downloads into his computer.

BackWeb, a company based in Ramat Gan with 55 employees here and in New York and San Jose, California, has just launched this service, paid for mainly by those suppliers of information — from newspapers to commercial marketers of goods — that want it to reach suitable audiences. BackWeb's pioneering technology allows Web site "channels" selected by the user to float onto the computer screen as graphic symbols, and to be clicked on at will.

The company was founded in 1995 by BRM Technologies, Ltd., an eight-year-old, Israel-based firm with experience in the Internet software market. BRM also co-founded Checkpoint Software Technologies, which developed global network security software. "Companies on the Internet are learning that posting information on their sites and hoping users will eventually stumble across it is not an effective way to market," says Eli Benkat, BackWeb's president and chief executive officer.

In the middle of December, *The Jerusalem Post's* Internet Edition became the first on-line newspaper to utilize BackWeb technology. *The Wall Street Journal* will be the second within a few weeks.

Anyone reaching *The Post's* Internet Edition (www.jpost.co.il) has the option of clicking on the BackWeb option. This allows him to register as a user at no cost, download 1.5 megabytes of free software and select a customized menu of BackWeb channels. Whenever he is connected to the Net, icons representing these channels will appear from time to time on his screen and offer their wares. They disappear in a few seconds if not clicked. The Internet Edition offers the main news headlines of the day (which flow out of the icon even without clicking it), news stories, a selection of opinion articles, editorials and business and sports reports. In addition, subscribers can select which sections of the newspaper they



Sample of the BackWeb page: Technology offering guidance through the cyberjungle.

want to receive automatically.

BackWeb also offers dozens of other channels, from financial and technology news to ski reports, astrology forecasts, children's games and weather updates. These include inquiry.com (a site for information technology professionals); Jumbo (an archive of 75,000 freeware and shareware programs); NetRadio Network (a round-the-clock Internet-only radio network); ResourceWorks (a designer and developer of educational courses geared to managers and info-tech professionals); SmartGames (a cornucopia of puzzles); and American Singles (a network of singles, with lists of new members, events and products of interest to unmarrieds).

There is no limit to the number of channels for which BackWeb users may register. Once registered for a channel, the user will automatically get presentations from the channel whenever they become available. Unlike the situation in which it's difficult to remove one's name from an electronic mailing list, BackWeb users can delete any channel from their list of preferences and from that moment, they won't receive any more information from that source. This gives end-users complete control over the sources of information they want to access, according to company R&D director Sueli Tolub.

In addition, say BackWeb co-founders Lior Hass and Iftah Sneh, the company's technology senses available bandwidth when the user is connected to the Internet. If the connection is idle because the user is just reading a particular Web page or browsing at pages, BackWeb goes to work behind the scenes to download presentations from the channels for which the user registered. This optimizes use of Internet connection time and reduces costs.

Since channel owners' icons are displayed on the screen even when users are not on-line, the impact the channels have on their customers is maximized. For example, a large department-store chain may want to notify loyal customers of sales; if the customer selects the company's channel, he can receive updated information in real time.

Hass notes that BackWeb technology can be used for broadcasting (sending information to all registered users, irrespective of factors like profession, location or personal statistics); narrowcasting (targeting a specific sector or combination of sectors to reach specific audiences, such as an airline seeking frequent flyers living in a certain country); or personalization (users indicating personal preferences and receiving the information according to a specific ID number). The channel owners receive from

BackWeb detailed reports on how often their site is being clicked on and what sections are most attractive.

BackWeb (its Web site is at <http://www.backweb.com>) also sells special software for servers in the workplace: employees' computer screens can serve as a company "bulletin board" and supply immediate information. The company can build its own broadcast channels and pipe in those of importance to staffers' job performance. BackWeb is best utilized by computers with 16 megabytes of RAM, a Pentium processor and Windows 95, but it can be used — albeit rather anemically — but those whose computer equipment is less souped-up, according to the Brazilian-born Tolub.

The only company that could theoretically be considered its competitor would be PointCast, a central network not too different from the America On Line server. It provides information free to users, but this appears "aggressively" on the screen whenever the keyboard is not being used, and the user must stop all he's doing, even if he's busy with something else or isn't interested in seeing it. BackWeb is not a central server but makes "enabling software" that lets any company establish its own BackWeb server and have a direct relationship with its customers.

The inter-stellar route to road safety

JUDY SIEGEL-ITZKOVICH

HAMASA Lehatzlat Hakochav (*Journey to Save the Planet*), a Hebrew-language CD-ROM by Oriem Vision, distributed by the Makhshvetz company in Herzliya, NIS 149, for ages five to 10.

Rating: four-and-a-half stars out of five

Itztrabal, Sifriot Ha'ashara Hadashot: Afilu Badrachim & Daber Elai Bismalim (New Enrichment Libraries: Even on the Roads & Speak to Me in Symbols), a CD-ROM by the Center for Educational Technology (CET), Ramat Aviv, for kindergarten- and elementary-school-aged children, NIS 99 (cannot be used unless one already has the basic *Itztrabal* disk costing NIS 199).

Rating: four-and-a-half stars out of five

ty helmet. Produced in Hebrew, it's odd that the mouth movements of the characters are not in synch with the speech, but apparently, the company produced an English version for export whose sentences are longer. Five- to 10-year-olds are a suitable age group for learning the traffic laws, but it will take an older child, a teenager or even an adult, to help them along to the end. However, the disk is beautifully and imaginatively produced, and highly recommended.

Itztrabal is a pioneering disk by the non-profit CET that turns the computer into a design studio for children. If you have a printer (especially an ink-jet color model), your children can produce magnificent bordered pictures, diagrams and signs for decorating schoolwork and walls and for making personalized greeting cards and gifts. The electronic palette has a large number of options, including sound; one can make greeting cards on a computer diskette with sounds and pictures, and give them away.

Since the original disk was released to an appreciative audience, CET decided to produce supplementary disks that triple the number of images and sounds, once the original *Itztrabal* is in your hard disk. This new disk teaches road safety and symbols. Unlike most CD-ROMs for children, it doesn't lead them every step of the way, but encourages children's initiative and imagination, so that every user will produce a unique result.

Itztrabal can be used at one to six levels, depending on the child's age, with the sixth containing all the available options. The road-safety section has a large selection of sounds: The sudden braking of a vehicle, a bus or car engine, a tractor, traffic, birds chirping and so on. The user can pick any or several of these to produce a tableau.

There are also many background photographs and drawings to choose from, including a children's playground, a highway or a country road. The user must select pictures of children, adults, houses, vehicles, traffic lights, street furniture and road signs, and place them in a way that shows safe and/or dangerous behavior. One can also add Hebrew road-safety slogans, such as "Even Crossing at the Green Light Demands Caution." There is a road-sign dictionary that displays all symbols and what they mean, but it would be a good idea for an adult to explain things to younger children.

The Symbols section of the disk offers an incredible variety of graphic pictures, from music and the arts, to sports, professions and animals. There is also a repository of hieroglyphics and Bliss symbols (these were developed to help the disabled express themselves). As in the original *Itztrabal* disk, one can choose from a fantastic array of 180 designs for making screen "wallpaper" on which drawings can be produced.

If both of these disks help produce a road-safety-aware younger generation, a dent could be made in the accident toll in the decades ahead.

Penetrating the blood/brain barrier

HEALTH SCAN
POST HEALTH REPORTER

THE brain is like a fortress, and only a handful of drugs pass the blood/brain barrier that makes it so protected from substances that enter the bloodstream. But this advantage turns into a disadvantage when a tumor starts growing in the brain. Chemotherapy drugs that destroy tumors in the rest of the body have difficulty penetrating the compressed tissues inside the skull because their molecules are too large.

Hadassah-University Hospital in Jerusalem's Ein Kerem has become the only medical center outside the US that is offering a special treatment therapy that greatly increases the amount of chemotherapeutic drugs that can enter the brain. It is already in use; tried in four American hospitals.

Professor Tali Siegal, a neuro-oncologist who heads the project at Hadassah, says the therapy is meant both for primary cancers and for secondary metastases that

spread from another source. The patient must undergo a series of tests, from a dental exam and angiography to various scans, to determine whether they can safely undergo the procedure. The innovative method, developed in Portland, Oregon, requires bringing the patient to the operating room and injecting a concentrated solution of a sugar called mannitol into the cranial artery, supplying blood to the site of the tumor. The mannitol causes the cells to contract, causing the intercellular spaces in the blood vessels to expand and permit the entry of the chemo drugs, which are injected immediately afterwards.

Radiation therapy is sometimes, but not always, needed later. Treatment of 4,000 US patients has shown that the brain is thus

significantly exposed to the chemo drugs, which have proven themselves as effective against malignancies in the rest of the body. No serious complications were reported. A medical team from Portland supervised the first treatments at Hadassah and will follow up the patients' reactions to the therapy.

DO CELL PHONES FRY BRAINS?

No one in the world knows for sure whether regular use of cellular phones poses a danger to health. That view was voiced by Professor James Lean, head of the International Commission for Radiation Research, and Dr. Ya'acov Gwea, director of the communications engineering department at the Holon Center

For Technological Education. Speaking at a recent radio-science conference in the Holon center, the two experts said that the influence of cellular-phone radiation could be either awesome or infinitesimal. Current claims are contradictory, and additional research is needed.

Dr. Yosef Shapira, president of the Israel Radio Sciences Committee, said the great variety of electronic equipment being used today requires legislation setting new standards that will protect public health. Shapira noted that Israel recently joined a European initiative in this field. As a result of the conference, a council will be set up here to investigate the influences of radio waves on public health; it will include representatives from government ministries,

the universities, public organizations, telecommunications networks, and the local telecommunications industry.

GUMMING UP THE WORKS

Chewing too much sugarless gum can cause diarrhea, according to *The Lancet*, which has published a case report on a British woman who chewed on up to 60 sticks of gum a day. Doctors were baffled when the 32-year-old air stewardess was admitted to a hospital with chronic severe diarrhea and intestinal pain. Her blood, urine, liver, and intestinal tests were all normal. Finally, she happened to offer an important clue: Her heavy "diet" of sugarless gum introduced 75 grams of sorbitol into her body. This sugar substitute is neither digested nor absorbed by the digestive system and has a laxative effect. When she reduced her intake, she recovered.

To make African deserts green

NEW WORLDS
POST SCIENCE REPORTER

ISRAEL suffers from a chronic deficit of potable water, and hasn't been very successful in reducing the overdraft. But it is still in better shape than western Africa — countries like Burkina Faso, Mali, Senegal, Ghana and Nigeria — where the meager amount of rainfall runs off rather than being absorbed by the soil.

Fifteen agricultural scientists from this part of Africa recently came to Ben-Gurion University of the Negev in Beersheba for a two-week workshop on the use of plants for increasing the efficiency of rainwater.

BGU experts Professors Dov Pasternak and Dov Schlissel, who organized the workshop, showed their guests species of plants that thrive in the dry season and can be used as a ground cover to divert rainwater that would otherwise be lost.

At the end of their studies, the Africans were presented with 100 kilos of plants, which will be cultivated in their native



Visitors from arid African countries at a seminar at Ben-Gurion University hold specimens of plants which are particularly suited to their climates.

countries as the beginning of pilot projects. When Air France, which was to take them home, heard about the project, it waived the substantial excess-baggage charges for the plants as the airline's personal contribution to the battle against desertification.

THE LAW — ON PLASTIC

The latest edition of the largest legal database in the country has been released by CDI Systems of Jerusalem. Called *Takdin*, the CD-ROM contains 800 new rulings of the Supreme Court and High Court of Justice, including that dealing with the appeal of Yitzhak Rabin's murderer, Ruti Nahmani's suit to obtain her frozen embryos, and the appeal of the Temple Mount Faithful regarding Solomon's Stables.

The disk, which is updated every quarter, updates the previous one, with a total of 2,000 new rulings at all court levels — from the Supreme Court down to the district and magistrates' courts and the labor courts.

The software, which now contains 35,000 cases, also presents all of the country's laws in their most current version since 1949.

Lawyers' work is eased by the software's quick search features, according to CDI Systems director Hillel Ashkenazi. The disk also contains a large bibliography on legal articles that appeared in journals and the general press and a glossary of legal terms.

The disk costs \$300 plus VAT for the initial disk, and \$125 for the update (but we all know that lawyers can afford it).

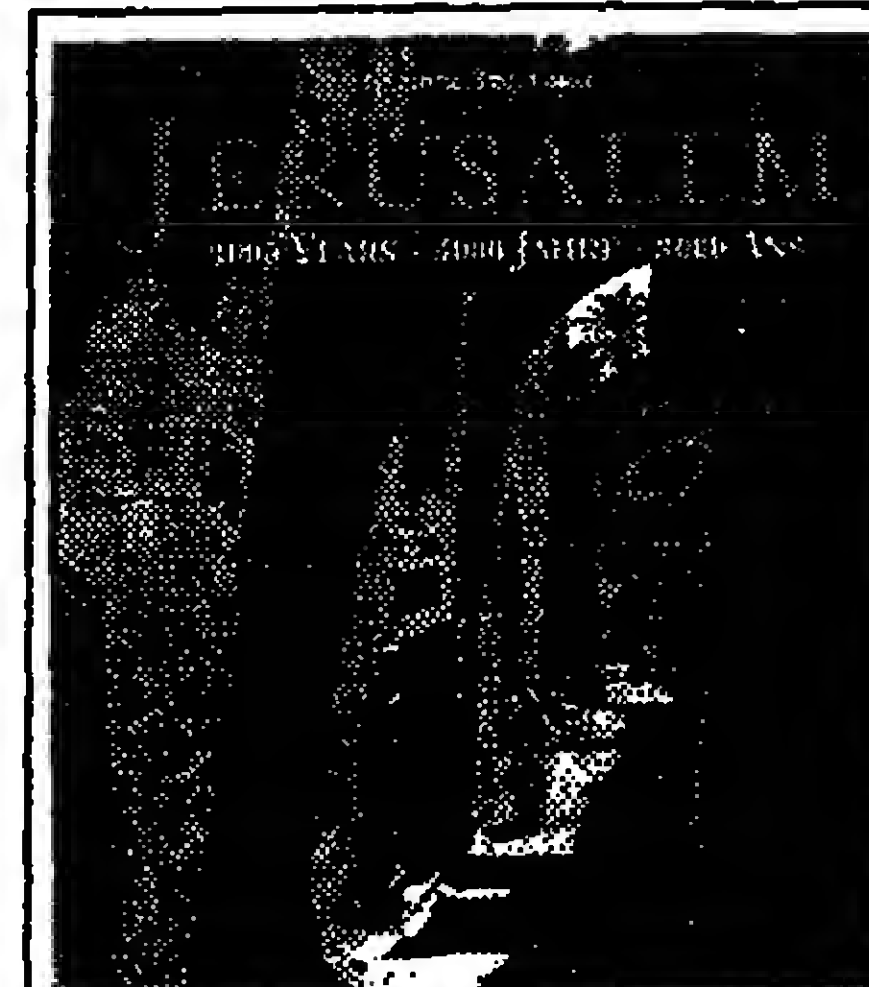
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Vilna'i's targets

WHILE not beating the drums of war, Deputy Chief of General Staff Maj. Gen. Matan Vilna'i used the opportunity of presenting the IDF's 1997 work plan to send the clearest message possible concerning the threat of future conflict with Syria.

"The likelihood of a war with Syria is greater than it was a year or two ago," Vilna'i bluntly stated at a press conference for military correspondents. He told the reporters that following Syria's redeployment of its crack commando divisions to the Mount Hermon region, Israel has increased its preparedness for war by replenishing exhausted ammunition supplies, introducing advanced artillery and upgraded tanks and improving training exercises. The IDF's working assumption for next year, he added, is that Israel is likely to find itself in a military confrontation with Syria.

Vilna'i's remarks seem aimed at two quite disparate targets. The first is Damascus. Syria's redeployments in the late summer increased fears in Israel that Syria was planning a smash and grab raid on Israeli positions on Mount Hermon, as the first stage of a combined military and diplomatic assault to force Israeli concessions on the Golan Heights. According to this scenario, Syria would launch a small-scale attack, forcing an Israeli response, before an internationally brokered cease-fire would lead to the resumption of the stalled peace talks between Jerusalem and Damascus. The talks, according to this thesis, would eventually lead to Israeli territorial concessions.

As Vilna'i stressed at his press conference, the IDF's increased preparedness is intended as a deterrent to prevent any Syrian action and not an invitation to conflict. The importance of this deterrence cannot be overstated: The dynamics of war are such that even one small military maneuver can quickly snowball into an unintended larger conflict, which then takes on a momentum of its own.

Moreover, Israel cannot allow itself to be threatened into negotiations. Just as the Oslo process demanded that the PLO commit to ending violence against Israel, so too Israel cannot resume the Wye Plantation talks with Syria under the shadow of future strife. Despite Prime Minister Binjamin Netanyahu's confidence that he can bring about a peace treaty between Israel and Syria within the next four years, a quick and successful resumption of peace talks seems most unlikely.

The Hizbullah roadside bomb which killed two IDF soldiers last week in south Lebanon brought the number of IDF fatalities there to 27 for 1996 and Hizbullah, with Syria's express backing, is stepping up its attacks in the security zone. Dozens of plane-loads of weapons from Iran destined for Hizbullah — including the fiberglass imitation rocks in which the deadly

roadside bombs are hidden — have landed in Damascus over the last few months.

Although Syria claims it is only helping Hizbullah resist Israel's occupation of southern Lebanon the truth of the matter is that Israel badly wants to leave Lebanon, while Damascus is happy to have it stay there. Indeed, one of the Netanyahu government's first diplomatic initiatives was the "Lebanon first" proposal, under which Israel would withdraw from southern Lebanon in return for the Lebanese army moving south and disarming Hizbullah. Syria, the power broker in Lebanon with some 40,000 troops stationed there, rejected the deal, preferring to keep Hizbullah as a means of applying military pressure on Israel to force concessions on the Golan Heights.

But aside from Syria, Vilna'i also had another target, closer to home, for his remarks: the Treasury. Over the next few weeks, the defense establishment will be pressing its case in the cabinet for a reported NIS 2 billion budget increase, which is at odds with the government's determination to slash spending due to the country's worsening economic situation.

In a meeting last Thursday with the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee and representatives of the Knesset Finance Committee, both Vilna'i and Chief of General Staff Lt. Gen. Arnon Lipkin-Shahak argued that due to the worsening security situation in the North, and unpaid compensation for the expenses of last spring's Operation Grapes of Wrath, more money was needed for defense if long-term military projects were not to be harmed.

No one would accuse the army's top brass of scare-mongering for the sake of increasing the defense establishment's budget; the threat from Syria is no sheep in wolves' clothing, but there is the nagging fear that one of the major drains on the defense budget, salaries and pensions for professional personnel, has still not been properly addressed. At last Thursday's meeting, the Treasury's deputy budget director, Uzi Levy, claimed that next year's defense budget shows a growth of NIS 117 million in real terms compared with 1996 and that the early retirement packages for military personnel represented a time bomb.

Defense Ministry Director-General Ilan Biran's angry response, that the Treasury was "looking to get" the Defense Ministry, was hardly a reasoned answer to an important statement. The army has enough real enemies to fight before making one out of the Treasury. Israel's military planners have to take into account that the country's future relies not just on its military strength, but also its economic well-being. In the 1997 battle of cuts, even IDF salary and pension levels are not sacred.

OPINION



Unfair, maybe

CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER

IN the peace agreement with Israel, the Palestinians undertook to change their national charter calling for Israel's destruction.

Not a lot to ask. In fact it was practically all the Palestinians were asked. So what's happened? Upon signing the original peace agreement with Yitzhak Rabin in 1993, Yasser Arafat pledged in writing to change the charter. He didn't. Two years later, signing Oslo 2 with Shimon Peres, he promised really to do it this time. He didn't.

Things were getting embarrassing. With elections approaching and Peres needing to show he wasn't being taken for a fool, Arafat called a meeting of the Palestine National Council to change the charter. It still didn't. What the PNC did was vote to establish a committee that would report back in six months with changes to the charter.

That was April 24. It's been two months now since the deadline passed, and not a word has been heard about this committee — nor from the rest of the world, so professedly concerned to see the provisions of Oslo carried out.

Have Zbigniew Brzezinski, Cyrus Vance, James Baker and

Was Netanyahu in the right to do what he did? Yes. Should he have done it? No

other former foreign policy luminaries written an open letter to Arafat asking why he has, for the third time, violated the central Palestinian undertaking of the Oslo peace accords? No. Instead they have written an open letter to Prime Minister Binjamin Netanyahu expressing deep concern over "unilateral actions, such as the expansion of settlements" that "could halt... the peace process."

What Israeli offense provoked this outpouring of wise-man concern? Was Israel establishing new settlements? No. Was it expanding by one acre the boundaries of its West Bank settlements? No.

What Netanyahu did was make it easier for Israelis to live in existing settlements by restoring the kind of tax breaks they get if they live in hardship areas of the country (such as the development towns of northern Israel and the Negev) where life is a lot harder and more dangerous than in the big cities.

Can anyone doubt that a place where innocent families are routinely shot at — just two days before Netanyahu made the change a woman and her young son were shot dead in their car by Palestinian gunmen — is a hardship area?

Netanyahu's move was essentially designed to signal that the government was not abandoning the settlers. It was meant to prevent a situation in which — in advance of upcoming and momentous "final-status" negotiations that will determine Israel's size, shape and viability — Israel's presence in the territories withers away as a result of the tensions and pressures of living there.

Was Netanyahu in the right to do what he did? Yes. Should he have done it? No. It was far too minor to warrant suffering the kind of international attack that he ought to know by now follows any move by Israel to strengthen itself.

The Likud has a history of making mostly symbolic gestures that change little on the ground but incur large diplomatic costs (the Western Wall Tunnel, for example).

Yes, Israel had every right to declare the West Bank a hardship area. But for the relatively minor returns it will reap, it was simply not worth provoking the strongest language yet used by President Clinton to criticize Israel.

It is certainly unfair that every move, no matter how legitimate, that Netanyahu undertakes is subject to fierce international criticism. But life isn't fair, and the double standard in judging Israel is as powerful today as it ever was.

The world was willing to suspend it while Rabin and Peres were steadily retreating Israel on

Questions of price

URI AVNERY

IN the famous anecdote, George Bernard Shaw asks an attractive young woman whether she is willing to sleep with him for a million dollars.

After some hesitation, she agrees. "And if I offered you 10 dollars?" he asks. "What do you think I am?" the lady protests angrily.

"We've already agreed on what you are," replies the playwright. "The only question left is the price."

I am not trying to compare the Netanyahu government to the woman in the anecdote, but the principle is the same.

David Bar-Ilan, one of Binjamin Netanyahu's two chief advisers and a former Greater Israel extremist, has revealed that Netanyahu is ready for the establishment of a Palestinian state. In an interview Bar-Ilan gave to this newspaper, of which he was a former editor, he reiterated this surprising revelation.

Is it possible that, during Netanyahu's tenure, a Palestinian state will be established? Bar-Ilan's answer: "Call it anything you want... whether you call it a state or not is not really the important thing... [Ariel] Sharon keeps saying they really have a state already. In many ways it is much more of a state than it was envisioned as being in the Oslo agreement."

In what way is this true? Bar-Ilan explains: "They'll probably soon mint their own currency and probably there'll be very little that we can do about it... They have a flag, they have an army. They don't even bother calling the army a police anymore, they call it an army. They have foreign relations... they have embassies everywhere. If they declare a state tomorrow... I'm sure that the whole world will recognize it."

So Netanyahu no longer objects to a Palestinian state. But he objects to "unlimited sovereignty."

What limitations does he want? Bar-Ilan provides details: "It cannot have an army of a quarter of a million people." Meaning: a smaller army would be acceptable. Fifty thousand? 100,000?

"[It cannot] produce its own nonconventional [or] conventional weapons." Is there a Palestinian who is envisioning the manufacture of an atomic bomb, or tanks, for that matter?

"[We don't want] two million refugees standing outside Tel Aviv." What if the number is less than two million? And if they are not exactly near Tel Aviv? How about an agreed-upon humane solution to the refugee problem? "It cannot make alliances with radical regimes like Iran and Iraq." Ah, so it is okay to sign with Egypt and Syria, and of

Now that the principle of a Palestinian state has been accepted why aren't matters moving forward?

course with Japan and South Africa.

"[It cannot] control the airspace over Israel." What is this supposed to mean? Aren't Syria and Jordan already capable of threatening our airspace?

Actually, Bar-Ilan concedes that there is virtually no state in the world with unlimited sovereignty.

European states have relinquished part of their sovereignty, Bar-Ilan says, and Austria has committed itself to not having an army. (Actually Bar-Ilan is mistaken. Austria does have an army; it has only committed itself to keeping its neutral status.) In short, the Palestinian state would not differ from many other respectable countries.

The interviewer: "So what you're saying is let's not get hung up anymore on whether they call it a state or not, let's focus on the capabilities question." Bar-Ilan: "That's right. And, of course, the size and all that, and the limitations."

SO LET'S agree that it is a state. What remains only is the negotiations about its limitations.

Bar-Ilan, of course, plays the innocent. There is a tremendous difference between an entity recognized officially as a state, and any other merely state-like entity.

Who knows this better than Israel? Prior to 1948 we were offered a variety of "state-minus" formats, yet we insisted on a full-

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

FLATTERING COMPARISON

Sir, — Amotz Asa-El joins the army of Prime Minister Netanyahu bashing with his column comparing him with Ze'ev Jabotinsky (December 20). What was especially annoying was the distorted short shrift that was made of the military career of Jabotinsky.

Jabotinsky's role in founding the Jewish Legion, the first organized Jewish fighting unit in modern times, is entirely glossed over. According to *A History of Israel* by Howard Sachar, during World War I, Jabotinsky strove to create the Zion Mule Corps which was deployed by the British in the disastrous Gallipoli campaign. At this time, Ben-Gurion was organizing a unit to fight on the Turkish side. Later, in the face of opposition by Zionist and Allied leaders, Jabotinsky finally succeeded in mustering three battalions to form a Jewish Legion to help liberate Palestine from the Ottomans. Not only were Europeans recruited "with the active proselytizing efforts of Jabotinsky," but when they landed here, he also inducted Palestinian Jews. According to Sachar, the Legion paroled the Jordan Valley in the face of an expected Turkish counterattack and later joined "Allenby's climactic autumn offensive."

The *Encyclopedia Judaica* also credits Jabotinsky with more than "theory" regarding military activi-

ENGLISH LITERATURE

Sir, — The European Union's rejection of Shakespeare on their new banknotes (December 20) because he was thought to be anti-semitic reminds me of the reaction to the new English curriculum for Israel schools in 1972, which replaced a Shakespeare play in the literature syllabus by a choice of plays written in modern English — Arthur Miller, Bernard Shaw, Tennessee Williams, etc. This was part of the then-new policy of teaching English as a language of international communication rather than as a vehicle of cultural and literary appreciation only.

I was the chief inspector for English in the Ministry of Education and was amusingly shocked by a lead story in the right-wing *British Daily Mail* (not known as a newspaper devoted to cultural matters), which claimed, under the headline "Israel bans Shakespeare," that the new curriculum was Israel's revenge for Shylock and which accused me personally of depriving Israeli youth of the opportunity to become acquainted with the Bard. What made me really unhappy was the fact that *Encounter*, an international cultural and intellectual journal, took up the story — it should have known better. A vicious pen in an Israeli evening newspaper saw the decision as an example of the lack of literary taste to be expected of the new "linguistic" orientation being given to English teaching and

HANDGUNS

Sir, — I was in an Eilat hotel recently, when two large families checked in. It was very clear that the men were carrying pistols in their waistbands, hardly necessary in Eilat. The hotel was full of English and European visitors, who would find the carrying of handguns objectionable. In England at the moment, following the Dunblane murders, there is a very strong feeling against handguns. I do feel that guns should not be allowed on hotel premises and would urge hotel proprietors and the Ministry of Tourism to ensure that they are put in a safe place on checking in.

When I stayed at St. Andrew's Hospice, some years ago, there was a clear rule that all arms had to be placed in the hotel's strong-room; I hope that other hotels will follow suit. Perhaps those chains run by English chairmen might set the example.

BARBARA LEWIS

Oxford.

INTELLIGENT COMMENTARY

Sir, — It's easier to attack one's friends than one's enemies. Enemies retaliate.

The destroyed, mindless attacks on journalist Thomas Friedman are not only cowardly, but self-destructive. Friedman has not

PICTURE POSTSCRIPT



POSTSCRIPT

A DISTILLERY has won the most coveted slot of Chinese TV advertising time by bidding its telephone number.

Qinchi Distillery had won the rights to a five-second chunk of advertising during China Central Television's (CCTV) evening "golden time" with a record bid of 321,211,800 yuan (\$38.7 million). The figure was based on the distillery's telephone number.

Qinchi also won the much-coveted slot in the 1995 auction with a then-record bid of 66,666,668.88 yuan. Sixes and eights are considered lucky digits in China.

Demand for the four minutes and 40 seconds of prime-time advertising on CCTV is so fierce that the state broadcaster

Conversations with the Khazars

ARISTOCRATIC in demeanor, Yehuda Halevi (1075-1141) — considered the greatest religious poet since the Psalmist — was a self-made man. He was not related to any of the great Jewish families of Moslem Spain. Born in Toledo after the city was conquered by the Christians, Halevi crossed over to Moslem-held Andalusia, where Rabbi Moshe Ibn-Ezra recognized his talent as a poet. Eventually, Halevi's fame spread. His admirers wrote him panegyric letters which he accepted condescendingly. He was a physician by profession and did not depend on public support. In fact, he was a respected political leader of the community.

This emerges from the studies of the late Professor S.D. Goitein made in the Cairo *geniza*, asserts Professor Ezra Fleischer of the Hebrew University, in the current issue of *Pe'anim*, the quarterly that the Ben-Zvi Institute devotes to the study of oriental Jewry.

Halevi's is best known for his philosophical conversation-treatise *Kuzari*, an alleged record of conversations between the king of the Khazars, in the Crimea, and the friend who tries to convince him of the superiority of the Jewish religious approach. Halevi pretended to treat *Kuzari* lightly — "a trifle," he explained to an inquirer in Egypt; a work he had composed partly in answer to

THERE AND THEN
SRAYA SHAPIRO

doubts raised by a Karaite. But most likely, Fleischer contends, Halevi had in mind his fellow Jewish readers, in whom he wished to instill pride in their culture.

Ritual was, of course, central to a medieval scholar, but in Halevi's eyes Judaism contained general culture — philosophy, astronomy, natural sciences — and not solely religion.

The Jewish religion was humiliated because it sought backing from extraneous doctrines.

In *Kuzari*, says Fleischer, Halevi called not for religious revival, but for basic severance from Spanish culture — from Spain! Spain was in turmoil — areas were changing hands between Moslem and Christian rulers, and the Jews suffered. Jews were murdered in Toledo and in Majorca.

Halevi deplored the events in his poems, but in Moslem Spain Jews felt secure. None of the 40 noted poets of his period referred to the pogroms, except Halevi. He also wrote long poems evoking Zion. He was in the West, but his heart was in the East.

After his 50th birthday, he decided to move. After 50, one did not chase young women any more, he wrote. But it took him some 15 years before he actually took the

road eastwards. What made him decide was surely the fact that Cordoba, where he had been living, was conquered by the Christians. He took with him his son-in-law, and the rest of the family stayed in Spain, waiting, most probably, for a sign from Halevi before they would "make aliya."

It was a long journey. He remained in Egypt for several months, enjoying life, honored by rich admirers — though also criticized for producing some light verse alongside deeply religious poems.

Finally, he hired a boat and went north, reaching Jerusalem, probably via Damascus.

Nothing is known about Halevi's life in Jerusalem. He probably died a short time after he arrived.

Legend has it that Halevi died under the hooves of a horse whose rider hit the pilgrim as he was kneeling at the approaches of the Holy City, reciting his famous poem, "Zion, haven't you inquired about your devotees?" In fact, this poem had been written "long before."

Halevi's journey was not a religious pilgrimage, however. According to Fleischer, Halevi hoped — intended, perhaps — that his act would induce the mass of his fellow Spanish Jews to follow suit, to save themselves from an imminent disaster. But they did not budge.



Students participating in Mashav's training course come from countries as varied as Togo (left), Ethiopia (center) and Guinea.

Education with an international flavor

Students from across the developing world have gathered in Rehovot to learn, among other things, a little Israeli know-how. Jessica Steinberg reports

recently took place in Egypt. Fried is studying the progress of Ethiopian immigrants, and that of Ethiopian women in particular.

Both are excited about the field work they've conducted in their semester here, but have had a more difficult time communicating with the other students, breaking the cultural barriers. "It's great because you get to somewhat experience all parts of the world, especially coming from the States where we're so sheltered," says Fried. "But there are lots of stereotypes out there, especially about us as Americans."

Ferris nods her head in agreement. "We're living with Third World countries, and sometimes it's unbelievable to hear about their lives back home. There's one guy from Uganda who tells us stories about living out in the bush without food, or about the goats wandering through his village," she describes. "And the woman from Nigeria who was telling us about her father and the tennis for each of his wives," pipes in Fried.

They have both enjoyed the program, complimenting the wonderful faculty and field study opportunities. "On the whole, it's been very positive," says Ferris, "but I think it's different for us than it is for the other students. They're able to communicate with each other and break down those cultural barriers more easily."

All too true. Besides creating a suitable environment for learning about new economic and agricultural technologies, Mashav has been a breeding ground for more than a few romances in its 40 years of existence. There have been several relationships between the participants, and some marriages as well.

A Nepalese man and Russian woman were among the recent couples, and a Jordanian student had women "standing in line for him," says Schwartz. "But like I said, we're not just about education; we'll do anything to make our guests feel welcome."

A scruffy scriptural reference

DID our ancestors in Israel keep dogs? And if so why then are dogs almost always mentioned negatively in the Scriptures? This is a question that many people ask.

Certainly our ancestors were familiar with dogs even back in Egypt, because when the Children of Israel fled that country the Almighty commanded silence of the dogs, that they not betray them. Dogs also appear in the paintings in the Beni Hasan tomb in Egypt.

Just to what degree they were domesticated is not known for sure.

By the time of the Second Temple, they were certainly a familiar animal around the home and were considered property — the Mishna has specific regulations laid down as to what a dog owner's liability is if a dog damages property, for instance by breaking things in a potter's shed.

It is true that of the 20 or so references to dogs in the Scriptures, most are derogatory. Dogs were not only ritually unclean animals, but they could also cause the contamination of an entire household by bringing some unclean thing into the place. This required ritual purification that was both tiresome and sometimes expensive, and therefore the dog was held in low regard.

It is certain that they were used for hunting, and rock carvings in the Sinai from the second century BCE clearly show ibex being hunted by a man and by two dogs, one clearly a Cana'ani dog and the other resembling a saluki.

Our ancestors may well have

HEADS 'N' TAILS
D'VORA BEN SHAUL



A modern-day Cana'ani dog. Were its ancestors scorned in biblical times?

used dogs to help hunt animals since an animal, to be eaten, had to be ritually slaughtered and therefore, unlike other nations, the Israelites could not go out and hunt them with a spear or with arrows or slingshots, but had to first either trap them or hold them at bay with dogs, so as to subdue and slaughter them.

They may have used dogs for herding but it is more likely that they used them as guards for the flock since nowhere in the Middle East did a true herding breed of dog develop.

This is in contrast to almost all other herding cultures. In this part

of the world, herding was usually delegated to women and children.

Another question has to do with cats. A reader in Beersheba writes: "The Bible is full of lists of all sorts of animals and birds, even reptiles and insects, but the cat is not mentioned at all. Why is this? Surely there were cats in ancient Israel."

Cats almost certainly were known to our forefathers even from the Egyptian exile. After all, the cat was first domesticated there, yet it is not mentioned in the Scriptures.

It is quite possible that because the cat had been deified and was part of the Egyptian pantheon it was deliberately ignored, as were other Egyptian deities such as Isis, Osiris, and others.

It seems likely that cats were not kept as a domestic animal at that time in Israel — cats are first mentioned in the Talmudic period and then more or less in passing.

On the other hand it may have been a simple oversight since the Talmud is not, after all, a textbook of zoology, or a naturalist's guide to Israel.

Far more attention is certainly devoted to the care and welfare of other domestic animals, but this does not mean that there was no awareness of these other species. It just shows the degree of importance of some animals in the culture.

There seems little doubt that the world of our ancestors was definitely not one where domestic animals were kept as pets but for the most part for purely utilitarian purposes.

THIRTY students sit at rapt attention in the large classroom, eyes fixed on their professor as he explains the complicated processes of agricultural marketing. Their features reveal a wide array of nationalities: dark Nigerians, almond-eyed Filipinos, swarthy Indians, black-haired Chinese. A range of approximately 15 languages gathered in one room, while the view out the window reveals yet another added dimension: the leafy green trees and grass of the Development Study Center in Rehovot.

For two months, these students have been participating in Mashav, Israel's International Development Cooperation Program with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Since the late 1950s — when the program was first initiated by then foreign minister Golda Meir — over 50,000 students from various developing nations have been trained through this program, learning how to solve the problems of hunger, poverty and disease in their own countries.

This year's participants include graduate students, professionals, teachers, field workers, technicians and government personnel amongst their ranks, taking courses in everything from adult education and agriculture to integrated rural regional development and women in the development process. And, of course, seeing a little of Israel while they're here.

Dr. Dafna Schwartz, director general of the institute, exudes a certain warmth and excitement about the program, an attitude that is mirrored by other members of the faculty. "When the students first arrive, they usually have a somewhat suspicious attitude," she says, smiling. "They're wary of being accepted by the others."

"But we want them to feel welcome, so we do more than just the courses, we really get them out there in the field." Over the course of the program, the students have drunk tea in Beduin tents, shopped in markets across the country, and visited religious sites in each city. If they're studying hi-tech agricultural methods, the institute has taken them to the fields, where farmers demonstrate their black-irrigation tubing and fish-breeding ponds. If

they're studying women's development, they've spent time with Beduin women in the fields and Ethiopian women adjusting to aliya. And when the Moslems in the group needed a place to pray, the institute set up a mosque on the Rehovot campus.

An integral part of the institute is its small but well-stocked library. The emphasis, explains Schwartz, is not just on books; but non-conventional material as well — such as the official and semi-official information that most readers don't want to deal with, but is of primary importance to the institute's students. "If you want specific information on cotton fields in Africa, we'll find it," says Schwartz, demonstrating the search command on the main computer. "Something more esoteric, like sesame crops in the southern region of Sudan? No problem."

Obtaining the information and stocking the database is part of the ongoing relationship with those who have participated in the program. Graduates of the program keep in touch through a network of Shalom clubs, a forum for the trainees to keep in touch and retain their professional networking connections.

They also contribute to the library-research center, sending ideas, brochures, theses, both the elementary and the complex, in order to create a full picture of what they're creating and accomplishing in their regions.

EMILY MACAHLELA, a 38-year-old trainee from South Africa, sit-

Chocolate smell relaxes you, study finds

THE smell of chocolate sends brainwaves "wild," and both distracts and relaxes people at the same time, experts say.

No other smell tested on volunteers had such a strong effect, Neil Martin, a neuropsychologist at London's Middlesex University, said. "Chocolate was quite a star performer in this experiment," Martin said. "It seemed to make the brain go quite, scientifically, wild. We found that they found it soothing, pleasing, and very relaxing."

About 20 volunteers were asked to sniff artificial odors including chocolate, spearmint, almond, strawberry and garlic. In a second experiment they smelled real odors, including chocolate again, baked beans, coffee, and rotting pork.

They sat in specially designed smell-proof rooms, wore clouded goggles, and had earplugs so they had to concentrate on the smells being presented to them. Martin told the annual meeting of the British Psychological Society.

Volunteers were not told what smells they were going to get.

While they sniffed, Martin's group measured their brain activity. Chocolate depressed brainwaves known as theta waves, which are associated with attention, Martin said. "This seems to be the one involved with attention. The more complex a task you do the more of this brainwave there is," he said in a telephone interview ahead of the conference.

Martin said it was not clear why chocolate alone should have such an effect.

"One reason is you are thinking about chocolate, maybe baking cakes or sweets, and because of

that you don't pay much attention to your environment and it relaxes you," he said. Or perhaps somehow the emotional center of the brain is being activated — but this would not explain why other pleasant odors did not have the same effect.

"The two odors you think might have been alerting — coffee and

roasting meat — had no effect at all," he added.

Chocolate also increased alpha and beta brainwave activity, which Martin could not explain. "Alpha is most commonly seen in a relaxed but waking adult, while beta is seen when people are doing something like mental arithmetic," he said. (Reuter)

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SPORTS/BUSINESS

Red-hot Rangers edge Ducks

NEW YORK (AP) - Defenseless Bruce Driver had New York's first power-play goal of the game - his first goal in 28 games - with 18 seconds remaining as the surging Rangers beat the Anaheim Mighty Ducks 3-2.

Driver scored his second goal of the season in Friday night's game when he took a shot from just behind the right faceoff circle that deflected off a Ducks player past goaltender Guy Hebert.

The Rangers got the late opportunity when Darren Van Impe took an interference penalty in front of the Anaheim net with 1:53 remaining. The Ducks argued

about the call by referee Kerry Fraser, and also about the winning goal, claiming to no avail that New York's Adam Graves was in the crease.

The Rangers, who also got goals from Graves and Alexander Karpovtsev, are 12-2-1 in their last 15 games.

Teemu Selanne scored his 19th goal when the one-timed a cross-ice pass from the left faceoff circle, and the puck deflected past screened Rangers goaltender Mike Richter with 5:54 remaining to give a 2-2 tie. Ted Drury had the other Anaheim goal.

Stars & Bruins 4 Joe Nieuwendyk and Mike Modano scored on host Dallas' first two shots, and the Stars continued the best start in the 30-year history of the franchise.

Former Bruin Dave Reid had a goal and two assists to tie a career-high three-point game, and Jere Lehinen added a goal and assist for Dallas. Pat Verbeek and Grant Marshall also

had goals for the Stars, and Modano contributed two assists.

The Stars are 6-1-2 over their last nine games, 22-11-3 for the season.

Andy Moog had an easy night with 17 saves to register his 343rd career win, tops among active goalies. Moog is 17-8-2 for the season.

Todd Elik, Troy Malenke, Ted Donato and Jozef Stempel had the goals for Boston.

Maple Leafs 3, Blues 2 Felix Potvin stopped 35 shots - including 18 in the second period - to lead visiting Toronto over the Blues.

Potvin is now 12-5-4 in 22 career appearances against St. Louis. His performance spoiled the evening for 20,100 fans, the largest crowd of the season at Kiel Center. They witnessed a pregame ceremony marking the 50th goal of Blues wing Brett Hull, earlier this week.

Todd Warrier, Doug Gilmour and Jamie Baker scored for Toronto. Larry

Murphy assisted on the first two Maple Leafs goals.

Robert Petrowsky and Joe Murphy had goals for St. Louis.

In addition to losing the game, the Blues also lost goaltender Grant Fuhr. He was hit in the mask by a shot by Mats Sundin and was replaced by Jon Casey with 14:11 remaining. Fuhr has a bruised chin, and is day-to-day.

Flyers 6, Oilers 4 Visiting Philadelphia got two goals and an assist from John LeClair to overpower Edmonton.

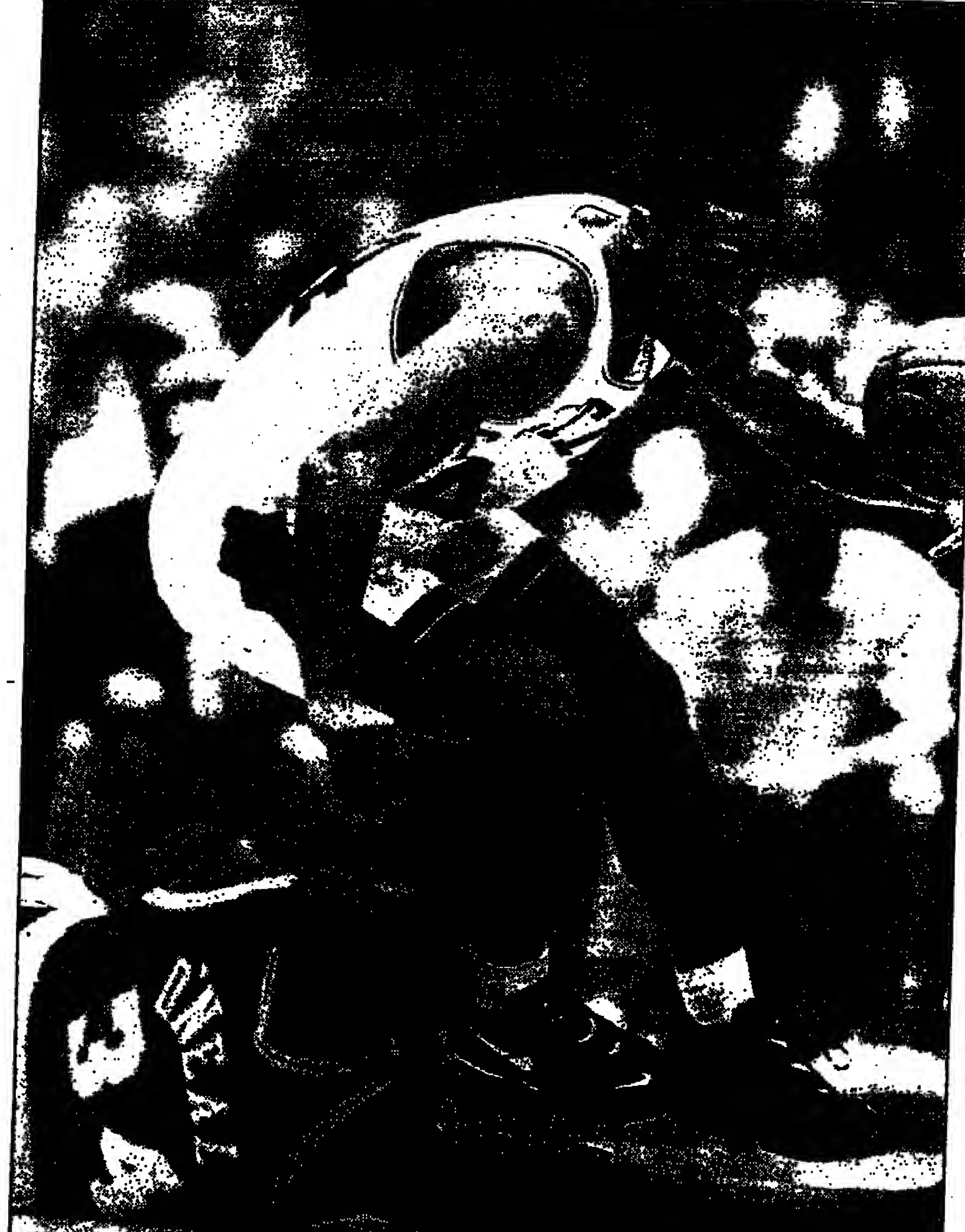
Philadelphia (10-0-2) took a 2-0 lead in the first period on goals by Joel Otto and Dale Hawerchuk, who moved into 20th place ahead of Gilbert Perreault on the career goals list with 519 in 1,168 games.

Table with columns: Eastern Conference, Atlantic Division, W, L, T, Pts, GF, GA. Lists teams like Florida, Philadelphia, N.Y. Rangers, New Jersey, Washington, N.Y. Islanders, Tampa Bay.

Table with columns: Eastern Conference, Northeast Division, W, L, T, Pts, GF, GA. Lists teams like Buffalo, Pittsburgh, Hartford, Boston, Montreal, Ottawa.

INTERNATIONAL STOCK PRICES

Large table of international stock prices with columns for New York, London, Paris, Frankfurt, and various international companies like Astra, Amgen, and others.



SKIPPY - Boston's Rick Fox hops over the arm of fallen Shaquille O'Neal of the Los Angeles Lakers while chasing down a loose ball during Friday's game in Los Angeles.

Back problems no problem as Miami beats Charlotte

CHARLOTTE (AP) - Miami overcame more back problems - this time by center Alonzo Mourning - and extended the NBA's best road winning streak to 13 games with a 101-86 victory over Charlotte on Friday night.

Tim Hardaway scored 26 points and led a decisive 18-9 third-quarter run as the Heat moved closed to the Los Angeles Lakers' NBA record of 16 consecutive road victories in 1971-72.

Mourning had 12 points and seven rebounds in 21 minutes before leaving because of back spasms. Miami's Dan Majerle and Tony Farmer are on the injured list because of back problems, and Gary Grant didn't make the trip after sustaining back spasms against Orlando on Thursday night.

Deil Curry led the Hornets with 23 points. Bullets 100, Raptors 82 Chris Webber had 25 points and 13 rebounds as host Washington beat Toronto to climb over the 500 mark for the first time in more than a month.

Juwon Howard had 21 points and 11 rebounds for the Bulls, who have won seven of nine to improve to 14-13. The last time Washington had more victories than losses was Nov. 25 (7-6). Doug Christie scored 20 for the Raptors, 1-11 on the road.

Terrell Brandon scored 30 points and had four of his 11 assists during a game-ending 16-2 run as host Cleveland beat Milwaukee. The victory was Cleveland's sixth in seven games, and the Cavaliers' 11th in their last 12 meetings with the Bulls.

Brandon's streak of 56 consecutive successful free throws was snapped when he missed in the first quarter. Chris Mills added 21 points for the Cavaliers and Danny Ferry had 15. Vin Baker led Milwaukee with 23 points.

Nets 105, Pacers 94 Kendall Gill made eight of nine free throws in the closing minutes, capping a 31-point performance as host New Jersey beat Indiana to snap a two-game losing streak.

Robert Pack had 22 points and 13 assists for the Nets, while Shawn Bradley just missed a triple double

CLASSIFIEDS section containing various advertisements for real estate, rentals, and services. Includes sub-sections for Rates, Dwellings, Situations Vacant, and Households Help.

Table with columns: Eastern Conference, Western Conference, W, L, Pct, GB, L10, Streak, Home, Away, Conf. Lists teams like Atlanta, Miami, New York, Washington, Orlando, Philadelphia, New Jersey, Boston, Detroit, Chicago, Cleveland, Atlanta, Charlotte, Milwaukee, Indiana, Toronto.

Stocks close in record high

WALL STREET REPORT

NEW YORK (AP) - Blue chip stocks rose to record highs on Friday as bond prices rose following a report of weak factory orders.

point gains in late-morning profit-taking but recovered its footing in the afternoon. The stock market is enjoying a year-end rally prompted by investors who want to buy shares that have performed well this year.

Analysts: Stocks up in '97

WALL STREET WEEK

NEW YORK (AP) - Predicting stock market performance has always been risky. For the coming year, it is downright treacherous.

Instincts tell stock analysts the US market's 1996 party, which followed an even more raucous one in 1995, cannot possibly continue.

"I'm looking for a total return of 10 percent," said Rao Chalasani, a market strategist at Everen Securities in Chicago. "That's the best one should be expecting after having two spectacular years back to back."

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International stock prices appear on Page 9

Dollar surges

CURRENCY REPORT

NEW YORK (AP) - The dollar briefly surged past 116 yen to another 45-month high Friday after Japan's trade minister expressed concern about the economic outlook next year, inciting a new round of weakness in the Japanese currency.

The yen's decline also contributed to a broad rally in the British pound, which rose nearly 2 pence to hit the highest level against the dollar in more than four years.

lightened by the absence of traders who took off for the Christmas-New Year's holidays.

Although the low volume distorted price movements, market participants said the dollar's breach of 115 yen and 116 yen this week laid the basis for a possible advance toward 120 yen, an exchange rate last seen nearly four years ago.

"Even with the thin liquidity, the move was very significant," said Dennis Heidt, chief dealer at the New York branch of Banque Paribas. "We have broken an important level."

ISRAELI MONEY MARKETS

Patah (foreign currency deposit rates) (11.9.96)

Table with columns for Currency (deposit rate), 3 MONTHS, 6 MONTHS, 12 MONTHS. Includes U.S. dollar, German mark, Japanese yen, etc.

Shekel Foreign Exchange Rates* (27.12.96)

Table with columns for CHECKS AND TRANSFERS, BANKNOTES, Rep. Rates. Includes U.S. dollar, German mark, Japanese yen, etc.

*These rates vary according to bank. **Bank of Israel. SOURCE: BANK LEUMI

PROSPECTUS PIA-PRIME MUTUAL FUND

Fund Manager Leumi-PIA Trust Management Company Ltd. (Member of the Bank Leumi le-Israel Group of Companies)

Open Fund

According to section 31 (b) (2) of the Joint Investments Trust Law, 5734-1994 (hereinafter: "the law") notice is hereby given that a prospectus has been published as follows:

The Fund's Investment Policy and transactions for the Fund (see Chapter F of the Prospectus) 1. The Fund Agreement provides that: (a) At least 30% of the net value of the Fund assets will be all or any of the assets set out below: bonds and loans of any class. Notwithstanding this, an investment at a lower rate than that mentioned for a period not exceeding two trading days will not be considered a deviation from such rate.

Foreign bonds

Foreign Currency linked government bonds 74 Shares traded in Israel 5 Cash in foreign currency 13

Data concerning the yield of the Fund's Units in correlation to the changes in various indices:

Table with columns for Rate of Increase/Decrease in year ending 30.9.96, in %, 30.9.95. Includes Yield of Fund's units, Index of bonds, Consumer Price Index, etc.

Permit of Controller of Foreign Currency to operate the Fund

The permit of the Controller of Foreign Currency, including the various conditions for operating the Fund, are set out in Appendix F to the Prospectus. The permit will expire on 31.12.98 unless extended prior to its expiration.

Cumulative Fund (See Chapter N of the Prospectus)

Unless otherwise decided by the board of directors of the Fund Manager, the Fund will be cumulative and accordingly the Fund Manager will not be entitled to make payments to the unit holders.

"Unrestricted Fund"

The Fund is an "unrestricted fund". Details of the tax provisions applicable to an unrestricted fund are set out in paragraph 6 of Chapter O of the Prospectus, under the heading "Taxation".

Annual Fees of Fund Manager and Trustee (see Chapter J of this Prospectus)

Under the Fund Agreement, the Fund Manager is entitled to receive an annual fee equivalent to 4% of the average annual value of the Fund's assets as calculated for the purpose of fixing the unit price, but unless otherwise decided by the Fund Manager, it will receive an annual fee equal to 1.5% of the aforementioned value.

Expressions used in the Prospectus

Expressions used in the Law and in the regulations made thereunder, will bear the same meanings when used in the Prospectus, save where the context otherwise requires.

Submission of Applications

Applications for the purchase of the units offered are to be lodged with Bank Leumi le-Israel B.M. and the other members of the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange (hereinafter: "TASE") and will be forwarded to the Fund Manager through the TASE clearing house.

English Translation

The Hebrew version of the Fund Agreement, certificates of participation in the Fund and of the Prospectus are the exclusively binding text. The translator of the Prospectus has certified that the English translation of the Prospectus is a faithful translation of the Hebrew original (the certificate appears as Appendix I of the Prospectus).

Tel Aviv: 19 Tevet, 5757 29 December 1996 The Trustee: Kesselman & Kesselman Trust Co. (1971) Ltd.

*In this Prospectus: "Foreign Resident" is as defined in the Currency Control Law 5736-1978, and in the Currency Control Permit 5738-1978 as set out in Appendix E of the Prospectus. Under the said Currency Control Permit (in the paragraph Permit of Controller of Foreign Currency to operate the Fund) Israeli residents (including holders of an exemption) are not entitled to acquire units of this Fund.



MUTUAL FUNDS

FLEXIBLE

Table of Mutual Funds (Flexible) with columns for Fund's name, unit cost, redemption price, monthly yield (%), yield to date (1995 (%)), and NAV (in millions).

SHARES

Table of Mutual Funds (Shares) with columns for Fund's name, unit cost, redemption price, monthly yield (%), yield to date (1995 (%)), and NAV (in millions).

STATE BONDS

Table of Mutual Funds (State Bonds) with columns for Fund's name, unit cost, redemption price, monthly yield (%), yield to date (1995 (%)), and NAV (in millions).

COMPANY BONDS

Table of Mutual Funds (Company Bonds) with columns for Fund's name, unit cost, redemption price, monthly yield (%), yield to date (1995 (%)), and NAV (in millions).

FOREIGN CURRENCY

Table of Mutual Funds (Foreign Currency) with columns for Fund's name, unit cost, redemption price, monthly yield (%), yield to date (1995 (%)), and NAV (in millions).

MIXED

Table of Mutual Funds (Mixed) with columns for Fund's name, unit cost, redemption price, monthly yield (%), yield to date (1995 (%)), and NAV (in millions).

SOURCE: MISTAV Ltd - Managers of Mutual Fund and Security Investments DATE: 28-Dec-96

Key Representative Rates

Table with columns for Currency, Rate, and Change. Includes US Dollar, Sterling, Mark.

NYSE STOCK MARKETS

Table of NYSE Stock Markets with columns for Index, Last, Change. Includes DJ Industrials, DJ Transport, etc.

Other stock market indexes

Table of Other Stock Market Indexes with columns for Index, Last, Change. Includes FTSE 100, Nikkei average, etc.

Israeli stocks in US

Table of Israeli Stocks in US with columns for Stock Name, Last, Change. Includes Am Pet, Anis, etc.

NYSE MONEY MARKETS

Table of NYSE Money Markets with columns for Instrument, Last, Change. Includes 90-day T-bill, etc.

Labor rates

Table of Labor Rates with columns for Instrument, Last, Change. Includes Dollar 3 months, etc.

Foreign financial data courtesy of CommStock Trading Ltd.

Futures, Options, Stocks, Bonds and Mutual Funds 34 Ben Yehuda St. Jerusalem. Tel. 02-244963, 03-5758826 Fax. 02-244876

NYSE COMMODITIES AND METALS

Table of NYSE Commodities and Metals with columns for Commodity, Last, Change. Includes Cocoa (Mar), etc.

Spot market metals (US)

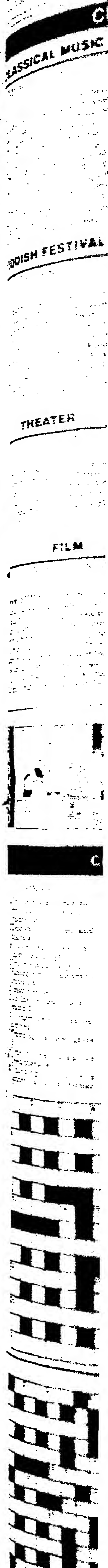
Table of Spot Market Metals (US) with columns for Metal, Last, Change. Includes Gold spot, Silver spot, etc.

New York metal futures

Table of New York Metal Futures with columns for Metal, Last, Change. Includes Gold (May), Silver (Mar), etc.

London metal fixes

Table of London Metal Fixes with columns for Metal, Last, Change. Includes Gold AM fix, Silver AM, etc.



Weizman leaves for first state visit to India

BATSHEVA TSUR

PRESIDENT Ezer Weizman is expected to inquire about the possibility of releasing seven young Israelis being held in Indian jails when he pays a state visit to India this week, the first by an Israeli head of state.

The detained Israelis, one of them a young woman, were caught with marijuana, a drug commonly smoked in India, according to Herut Lapid of Kibbutz Ayelet Hashahar who has devoted his energies to attaining the release of Israelis imprisoned abroad.

"Foreigners who are caught with this drug face stiff sentences and two of the group have already received 10 year sentences," Lapid said last week. "I hope the president will do everything to secure their

release, as a humanitarian gesture." The president and his wife, Reuma, will arrive in New Delhi today.

Tomorrow, they will be officially welcomed to the presidential residence by Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma, India's president, at a ceremony attended by members of the cabinet and other leaders.

Weizman will confer with Sharma and his deputy, K.R. Narayanan, as well as Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda and Foreign Minister I.K. Gujral.

Weizman will be accompanied by a delegation of some 25 leading industrialists who will hold talks to explore expanding economic ties

between the two countries.

Israeli exports to India totaled \$313 million in 1995 while India exported goods worth \$190m. to Israel.

The delegation will include heads of Israel's electronics industries who will investigate the possibility of joining in a multi-million dollar project to upgrade India's MIG planes. Weizman will also fly to Bangalore where he will visit India's space center and a former RAF base where he served during World War II.

During the visit, he will sign three agreements with the Indian government. India recognized Israel in 1950 but relations were kept on a low level until the exchange of ambassadors in January 1992.

Israel Bonds workers in US set to strike

MARILYN HENRY
NEW YORK

WHEN Gideon Patt takes over as president of Israel Bonds early next year, he may be forced to answer his own phone, as hundreds of staffers at Bonds offices in the US are prepared to strike at midnight Tuesday.

Talks between Israel Bonds and the union representing nearly 300 non-management employees came to a standstill on December 19, according to Kevin McHale, the union representative for District Council 1707 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees. The union covers support, computer and administrative staff, as well as Bonds' field representatives.

Five days later, Bonds asked for another meeting with the union on December 31.

The contract expires at midnight that day. "In 1996, going on 1997, no one in America is itching for a strike," McHale said, referring to grim economic conditions in the US. "But this group will not work without a contract," he said.

Bonds had offered an "insufficient" salary increase, and was seeking changes in pension plans and health insurance, McHale said. An Israel Bonds spokesman in New York declined to comment.

This would be the first strike at Bonds in a decade, McHale said.

The union is negotiating with the board of Israel Bonds, not Patt, or the outgoing president, Maj.-Gen. (res.) Natan Sharony, McHale said.

Israel Bonds has been generating less income in the past few years. It was expected to sell no more than \$850 million in bonds in all 1996, the organization said earlier this year. In 1995, Israel Bonds raised \$935m., which, in turn, was down from \$999m. in 1994. Those sales represent government debt, and the ceiling is set by the government.

Earlier this year, Israel Bonds, which has raised \$14 billion since 1951, accounted for slightly more than 30 percent of the outstanding government debt.

State reverses opinion in 'kidnapping' case

EVELYN GORDON

THE state has retracted its decision to ask US authorities to send a woman and her children back to Israel, after the High Court of Justice strongly implied that it did not consider the case to involve a kidnapping.

The case involves an American, Elsa Nimberger, who met and married an Israeli citizen, Zvi, when

they both were working at a New York hospital. In February 1995, the family came to Israel - according to Elsa, for a visit, and according to Zvi, to live.

A few days later, Elsa tried to take the three children back to the US, and a lengthy legal battle

ensued which finally ended 10 months later with a settlement in the Jerusalem District Court. This settlement gave Elsa custody and Zvi visiting rights, and as part of it, the court canceled an order preventing Elsa from leaving the country. In January 1996, she returned to New York with the children.

A month later, however, Zvi asked Attorney-General Michael Ben-Yair to bring her back, arguing that she had deprived him of his visiting rights, and thereby violated the Hague Convention on international kidnappings of children.

Ben-Yair agreed, and in July, he asked the American authorities for help. Elsa then petitioned the High Court.

At a hearing last month, Justices Aharon Barak, Mishael Cheshin and Dalia Dorner strongly implied that they found the state's position unsupported and issued a show-cause order against it. Last week, the state told the court that in light of the justices' comments, Ben-Yair had decided to withdraw his request to the American authorities.



Moshe Rivlin (right), world chairman of the Jewish National Fund, receives an honorary citizen award from Kfar Tavor council head Jossie Dola. As a 95th anniversary gift, the JNF, also turning 95, has just restored the Meshu spring into a 30-dunam park for the pioneering village in the Galilee. (Joe Malcolm)

JNF turns 95 amid controversy

MARILYN HENRY
NEW YORK

AS the Jewish National Fund celebrates its 95th anniversary today, it is facing a revolt from some of its regional leaders, who contend that the venerable Zionist organization is mismanaged and fails to send a respectable amount of funds to Israel. They are calling for the ouster of the national director and other officers.

The complaints come as JNF is reviewing its structure, revising its accounting, admitting an image problem and replacing its key professional staff after an audit highlighted numerous deficiencies.

Samuel Cohen, who has been the director of JNF for nearly 20 years, will no longer be responsible for daily operations but for long-range strategic planning. In addition to a new chief executive officer, JNF is searching for a new chief financial officer. A number of task forces are reviewing the structure of JNF and considering a change in the proportion of funds that are sent to Israel, according to JNF President Milton Shapiro.

However, Michael Lipof, head of JNF's New England region, said Cohen and Shapiro must resign.

"We can't do anything meaningful until we have a clean slate," Lipof said. "As long as the perpetrators of this mismanagement are in place, we can't go forward."

A recent, independent audit conducted by the Deloitte and Touche accounting firm cleared JNF of allegations of financial miscon-

duct, which were raised by several regional lay leaders.

"There is no evidence of fraud, misconduct [and] malfeasance by JNF personnel; nor is there any evidence of misappropriation of JNF funds," according to a report to JNF's board.

But there were management, accounting and fund-raising inefficiencies, as well as errors in JNF's financial statements that led to an "atmosphere of suspicion," the report said. It was impossible to specify, for example, how much was spent on education and other activities.

Lipof said that JNF's administrative spending was "unbridled" and that only 20 percent was spent on Israel.

"How can we ask our community to donate to an organization that is so top heavy that it is keeping 80 cents on the dollar?" he said.

His assessment was challenged by Robert Levine, JNF's national campaign chairman. JNF raised about \$30 million last year, of which some \$6m. was collected in "deferred gifts," which are essentially commitments for bequests. Effectively 40% of what JNF raises is destined for Israel, said Levine, an accountant by profession. That amount is some \$5m. of the available cash, which is spent immediately, added to the

"deferred gifts." Some 30% of JNF's costs are administrative, Levine said.

The crux of the clamor appears to concern Zionist education and the high costs of selling trees. Their costs, already misunderstood, were confused by sloppy bookkeeping and poor public relations, Levine said.

JNF is the only organization in the US conducting extensive Zionist education programs.

"Programming is equally part of our mission," Levine said, adding that the World Zionist Congress charged JNF with undertaking Zionist education in the Diaspora.

This season, leading up to Tu B'Shvat, is JNF's most public educational and fund-raising effort. JNF is expected to sell 100,000 trees - one at a time - to children in Jewish day and afternoon schools.

However, it costs JNF \$5 to process an individual \$10 tree sale. Levine opposes recent suggestions that JNF stop selling single trees. "It's an educational instrument, a symbol," he said. "It's worth losing money to have that symbol."

The regional leaders are to meet in Chicago next month, shortly before Tu B'Shvat, which falls on January 23. Lipof said some of the current regional JNF boards may fold. "[Last year,] I was considered a heretic," Lipof said, adding that now discontent with JNF is "widespread."

WEATHER

Jerusalem 7-18
Tel Aviv 11-19
Beersheba 10-19
Golan Heights 12-20
Tiberias 9-22
Afula 8-21
Samartha 9-19
Dead Sea 14-21
Eilat 16-23

Forecast: Partly cloudy to rainy

AROUND THE WORLD

	LOW	HIGH	WIND
Amsterdam	-6	16	clear
Berlin	-2	10	partly
Buenos Aires	17	26	clear
Caro	10	17	clear
Chicago	-10	14	cloudy
Copenhagen	-11	8	cloudy
Frankfurt	-11	15	cloudy
Geneva	-11	15	cloudy
Helsinki	-6	8	cloudy
Hong Kong	15	23	clear
Albany	15	23	clear
London	10	15	cloudy
Los Angeles	15	23	cloudy
Moscow	-10	15	clear
Montreal	-10	15	clear
Munich	-10	15	partly
New York	-10	15	partly
Paris	-10	15	partly
Rome	-10	15	partly
Stockholm	-10	15	partly
Sydney	-10	15	partly
Toronto	-10	15	partly
Vienna	-10	15	partly

Winning cards

THE winning cards in Friday's daily Chance draw were the ace of spades, king of hearts, eight of diamonds and ace of clubs.

Arab local council heads protest opposite PM's Office

POLICE prevented hundreds of protesters from entering the Prime Minister's Office on Friday during a demonstration organized by Arab local council heads to protest the government's refusal to increase the councils' budgets despite their growing debts.

"All attempts by the Follow-Up Committee to solve the problem and all approaches to the government were in vain and so the council heads will continue protest activities until the government addresses our demands," said Ibrahim Nimr Hussein, chairman of the Arab Follow-Up Committee.

Itim

J'lem couple wins stamp design prize

A Jerusalem couple has received first prize in the prestigious stamp design competition, the Robert Stulz Cup for philately in the field of music.

Naomi and Meir Eshel designed a series of NIS 2.40 stamps for the Philatelic Service in honor of the well-known 20th-century Jewish composers Arnold Schoenberg and Darius Milhaud. The cup was awarded by the widow of Stulz, who was a composer of operettas and movie scores in Vienna and a stamp lover.

Judy Stegel

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